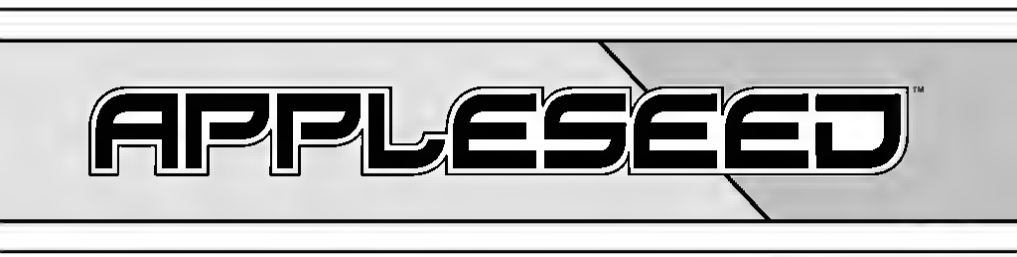
士郎正宗

THE PROMETHEAN BALANCE

APPLESEED™

SHIROW MASAMUNE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THE PROMETHEAN BALANCE

story and art by SHIROW MASAMUNE

translation by DANA LEWIS + TOREN SMITH
[with DUANE JOHNSON]

lettering by TOM ORZECHOWSKI

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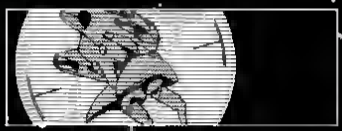

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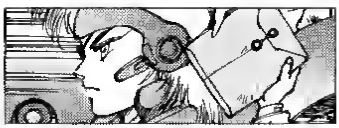
065 [22] OUTLET STORE



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108 [24] STEALTH

144 [25] SHALOM

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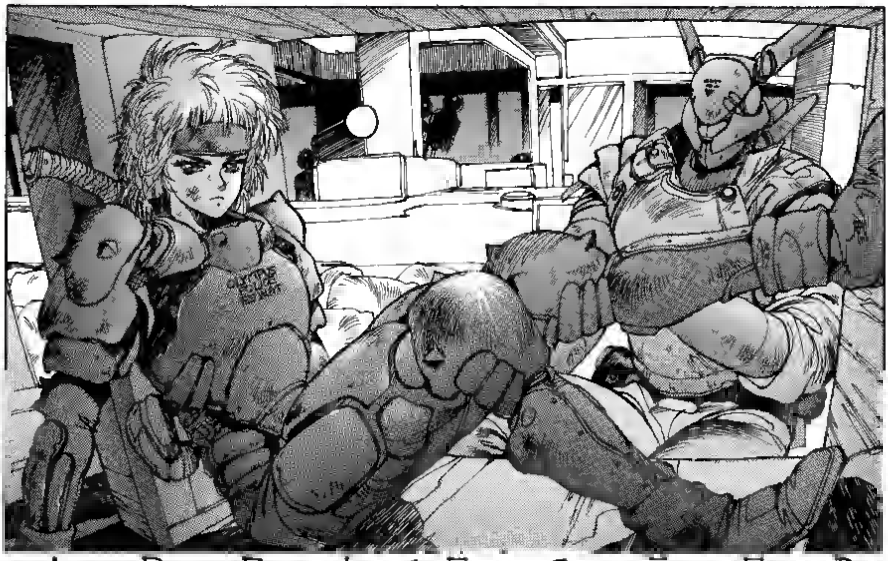

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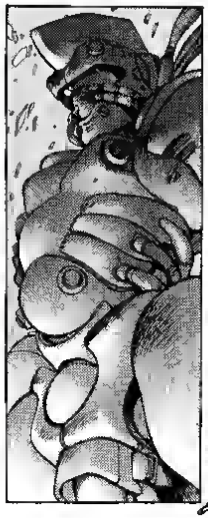

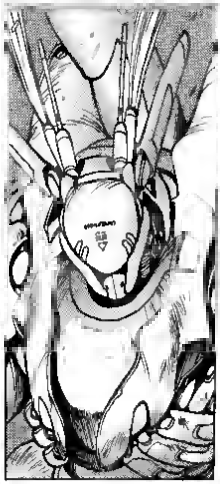

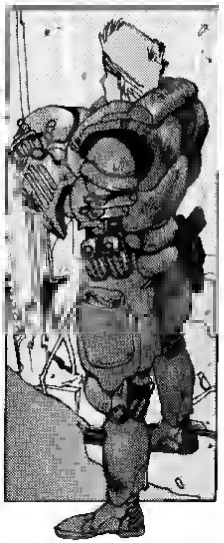

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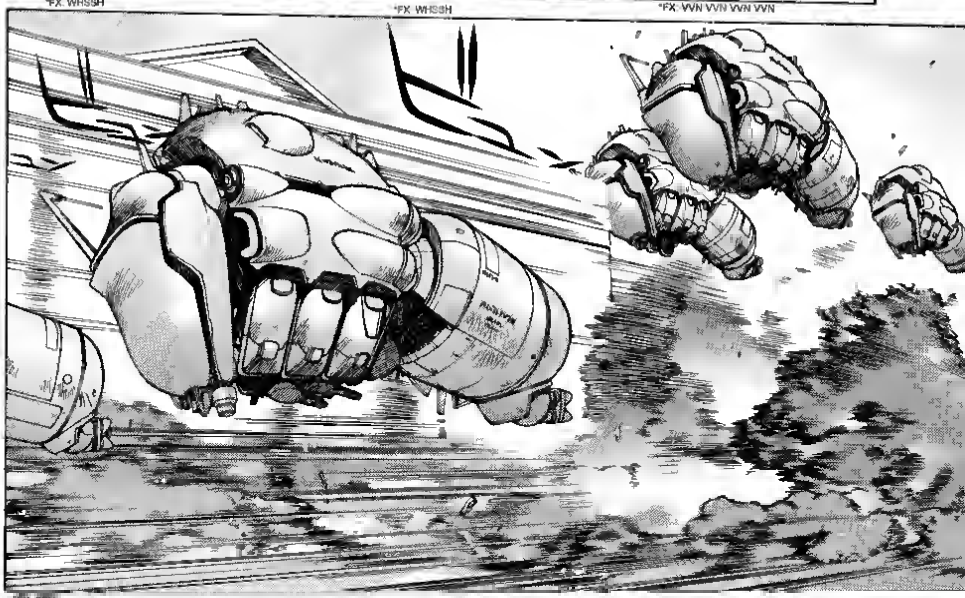
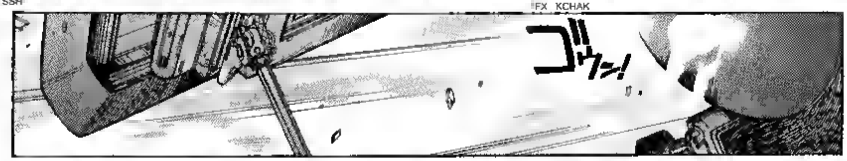
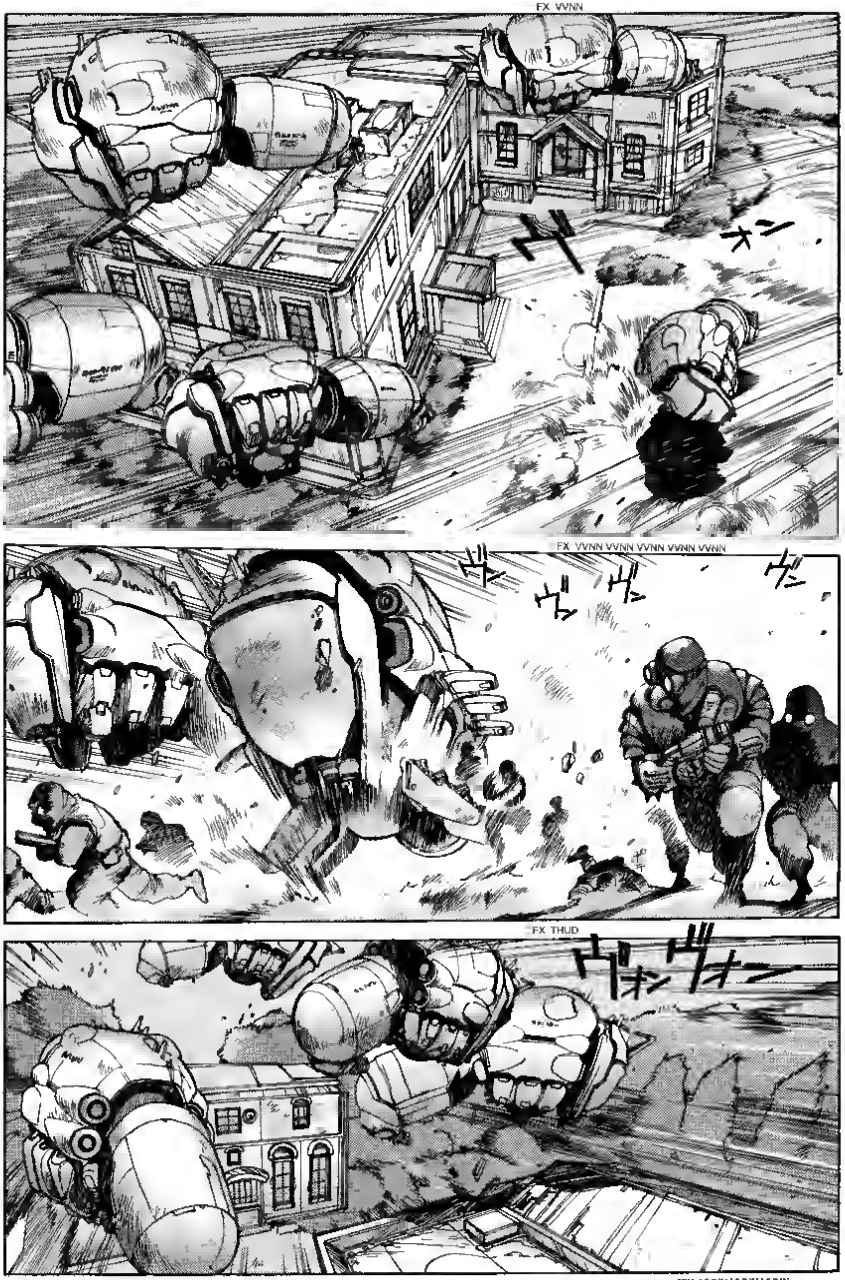
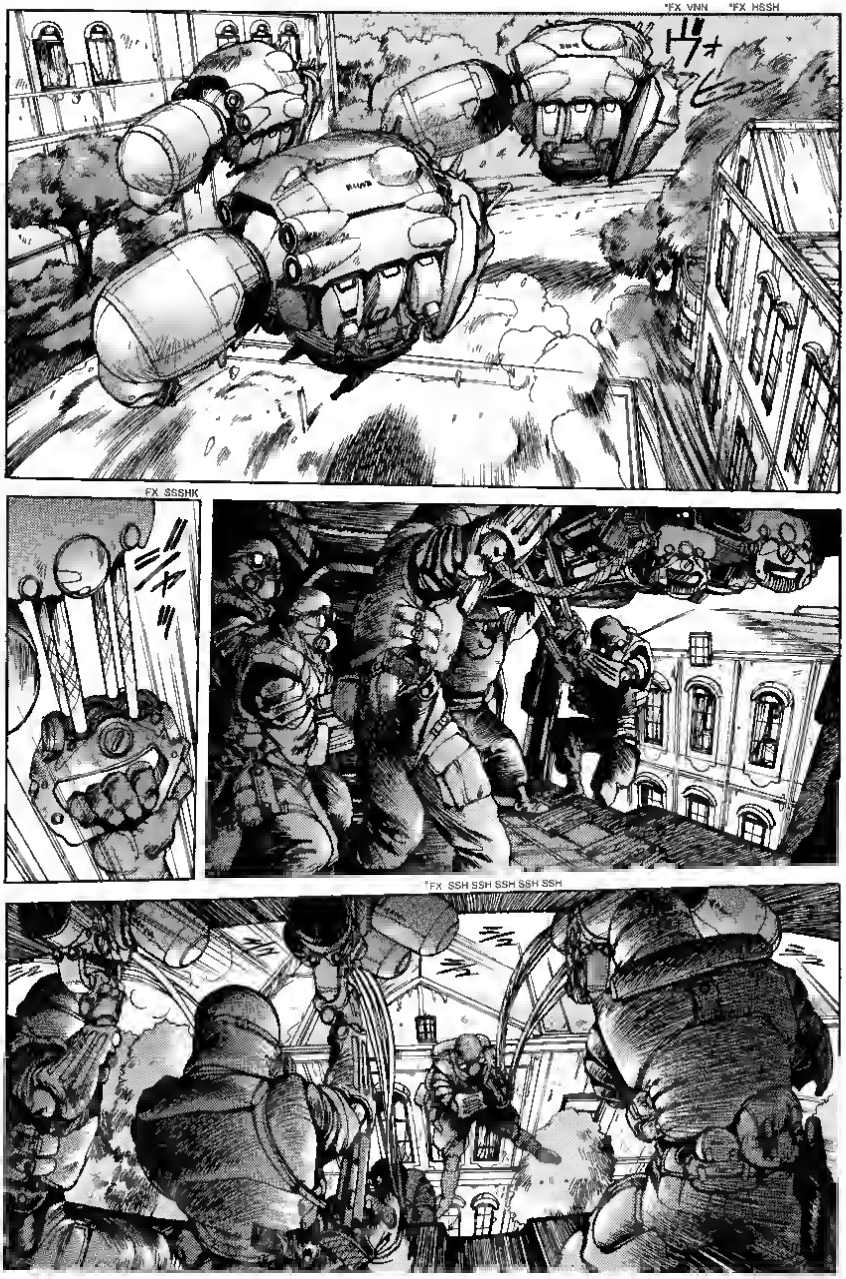


*FX: SSH

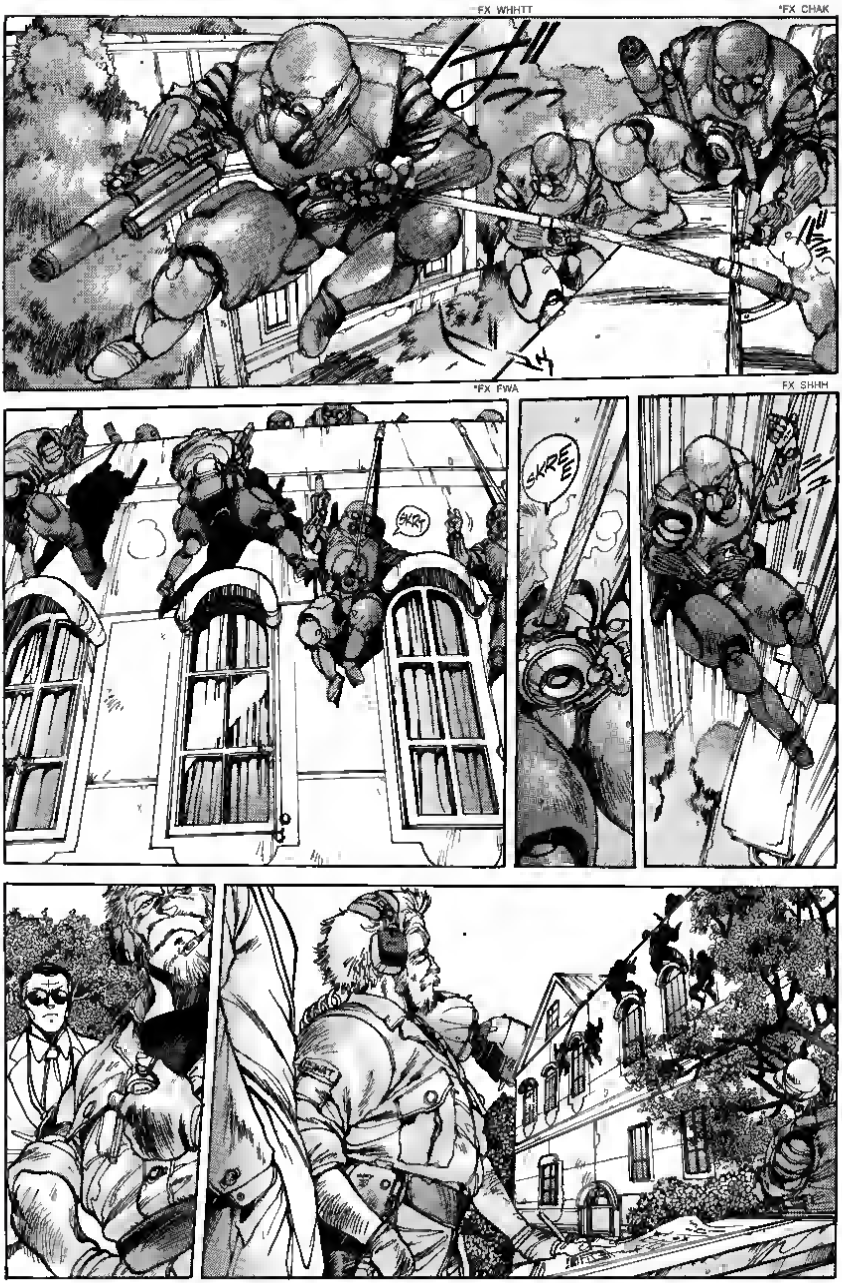
*FX: KCHAK

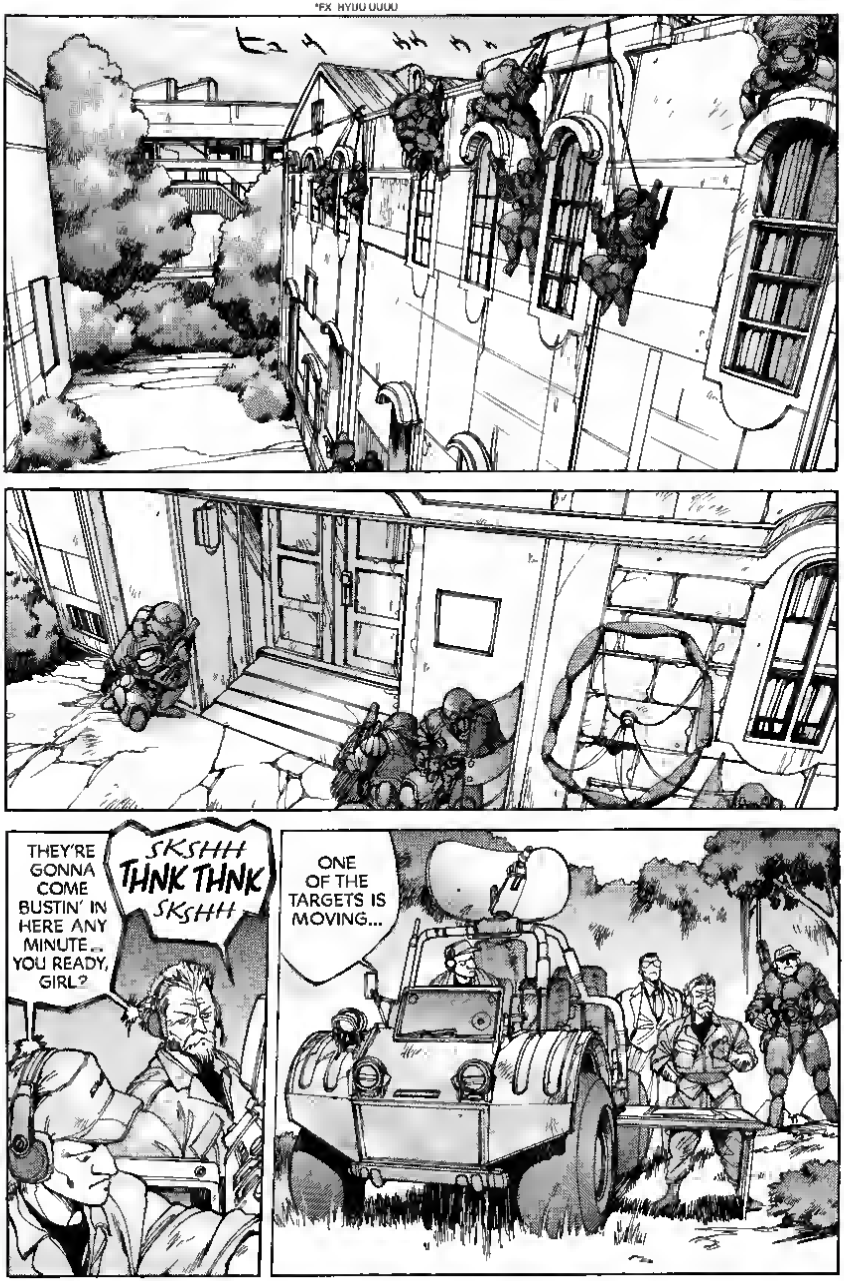


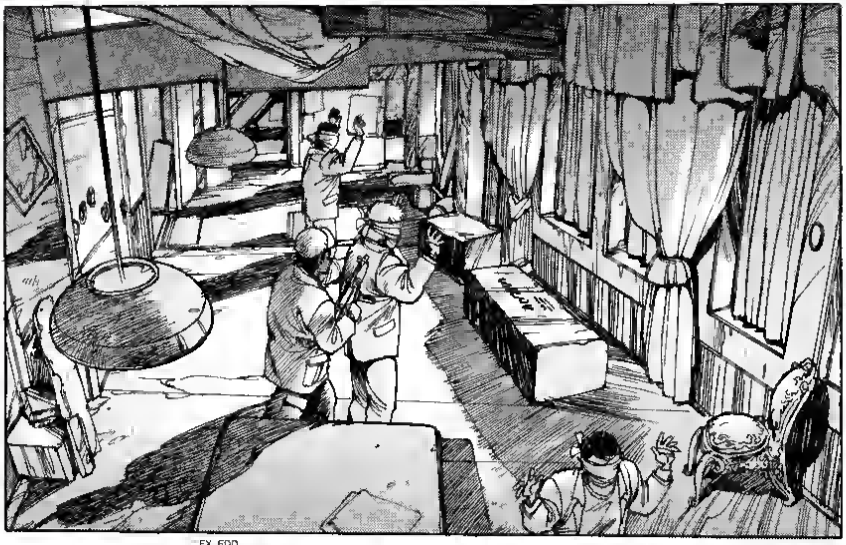

FX. VVNN
FX. VVNN VVNN VVNN VVNN VVNN
FX. THUD
*FX. VVNN VVNN VVNN

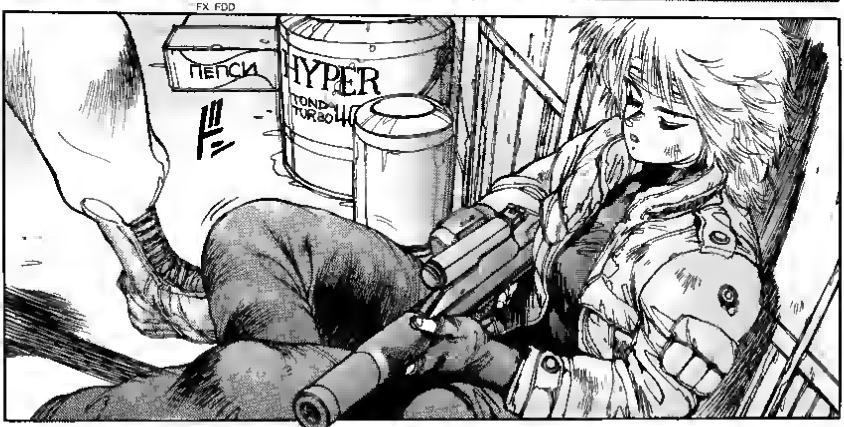

*FX VNN
*FX HSSH
FX SSSHK
*FX SSH SSH SSH SSH SSH

FX WHOO
*FX CHNK
*FX SSSHHHAAA
*FX WHO WHO WHO WHO

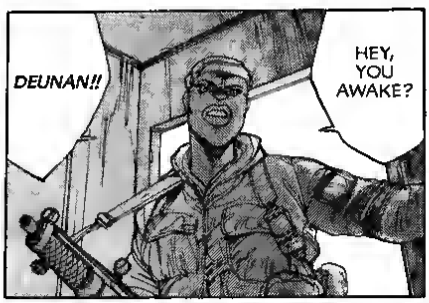

FX WHHTT
*FX CHAK
*FX FWA
SKRA
SKREE
FX SHHH


*FX HYUU UUUU
THEY'RE GONNA COME BUSTIN' IN HERE ANY MINUTE... YOU READY, GIRL?
SKSHH THNK THNK SKSHH
ONE OF THE TARGETS IS MOVING...



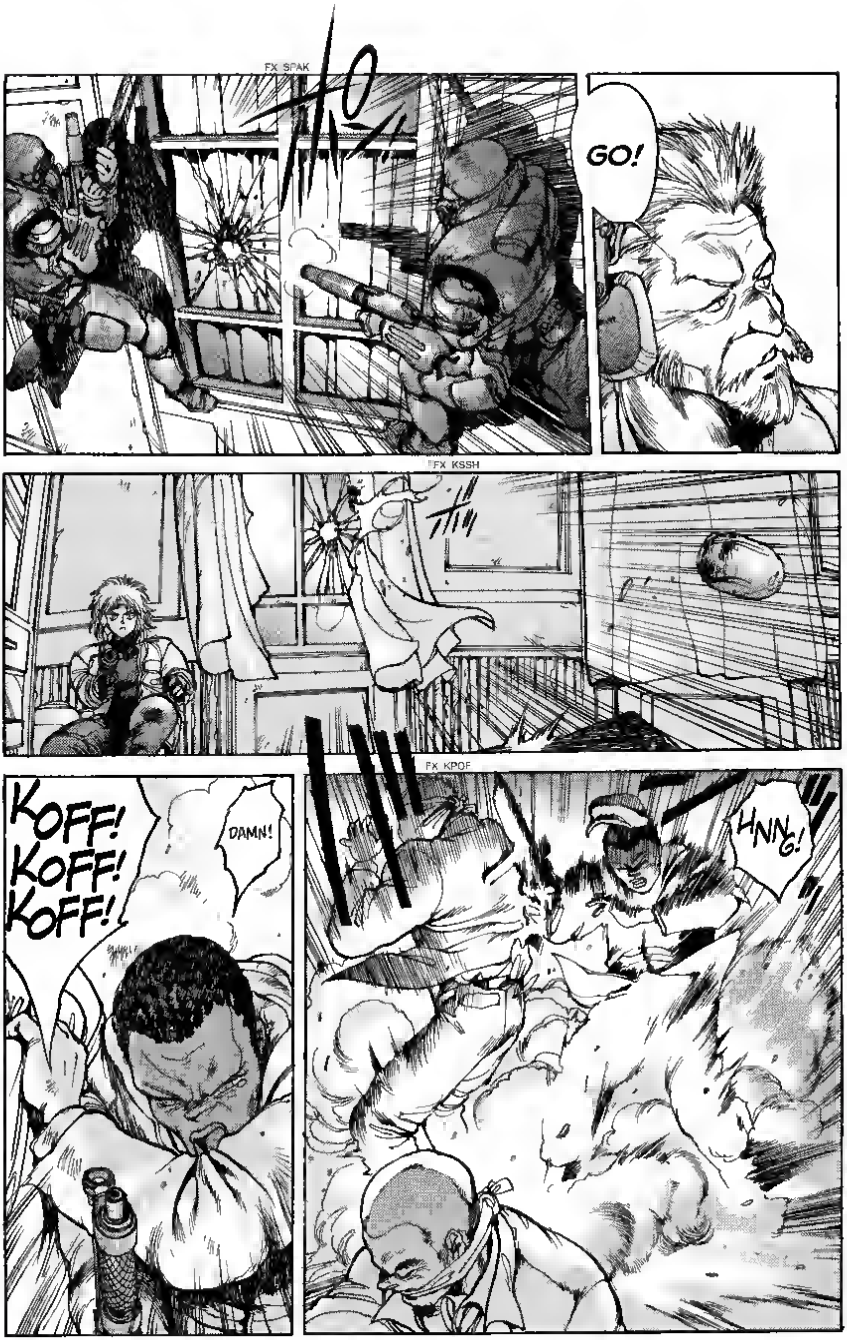

FX FDD
ПЕПСИ
HYPER

GHEE


DEUNAN!!
HEY, YOU AWAKE?

22, 205, 45... JOIN THE FIRST WAVE! TAKE DOWN ROOM 2-8 USING FIVE MEN...
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW!
WHAT DOES SOME TIN CYBORG'S SEX DOLL KNOW ABOUT IT, HUH?
HYPER
USING HOSTAGES AS SHIELDS... HMMM I DON'T LIKE THE WAY YOU GIRL SCOUTS* OPERATE. DIDN'T DO YOU ANY GOOD AGAINST THE MUNMA CROWD, DID IT?
ONE...
TWO...
ALL SQUADS SET. FOUR.. THREE..

*Deunan's derogatory term for former members of the United States Army Green Berets--prejudice learned from her father. The Munma Holy Republic Deunan refers to the "Second Vietnam" where the U.S. and the Soviet Union fought in a hell of sand against suicide troops and terrorism.


FX SPAK
GO!
FX KSSH
FX KPOF
KOFF! KOFF! KOFF!
DAMN!
HNNG!

TINK!
*FX SKSSHH

FX SKRASSH
GYAAA!
FX CHIK CHIK CHIK
FX SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
!
FX WHOO
HNGF!
FX SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK

*FX: SPAK SPAK SPAK
*FX: SPAK SPAK
*FX: CHIK CHIK CHIK
!
*FX: CHIK CHIK CHIK

*FX. SKRASSH
FX. BRRTTT
AAGH!

*FX: BRRTTT
*FX: SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
FX: SSHHKK
*FX: FDO
HNNK!

FX GRIND
CHRIST, EVEN A KOTUS COULD TAKE YOU OUT!
*FX WHOO
...
*FX ZIGH
LOSSES... FOUR.
C'MON, YOU CORPSES... ON YOUR FEET! Heh heh...
UNNG
ROOM 2-8 CLEAR... ONE DOWN, ONE DEAD... HOSTAGES ALL OKAY.
OOUNAP

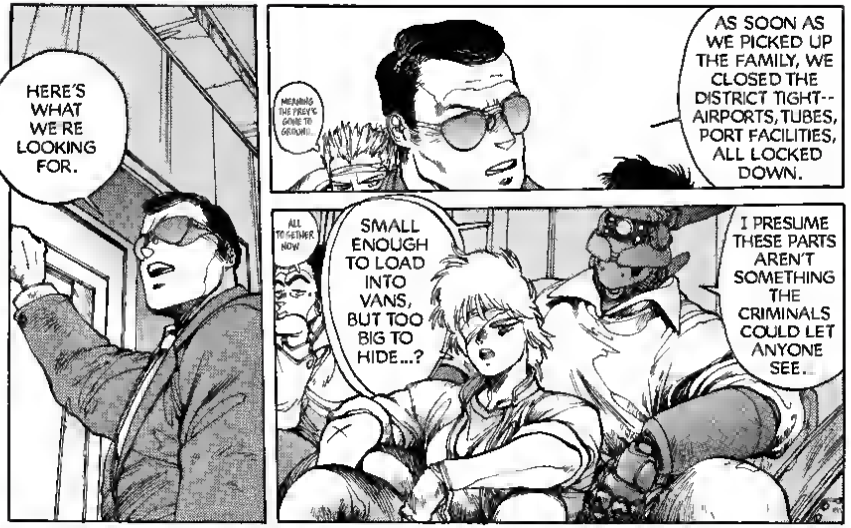
I WANT TO SEE THE SIX ON MY LIST IN BRIEFING ROOM C-4 IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.
IT'S NOT THE AVERAGE THAT COUNTS-- WHAT MATTERS IS THE ABILITY AVAILABLE AT THE TOP.
YOU *WISH,* JERK!
REMEMBER, YOU PROMISED-- IF YOU LOST, WE MEET AT ROB'S BAR. I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE GATE IN THIRTY MINUTES, OKAY?
HEY, NEXT TIME IT'S THE REAL THING!
YOU KEEP ALL THE GOODIES FOR YOURSELF!

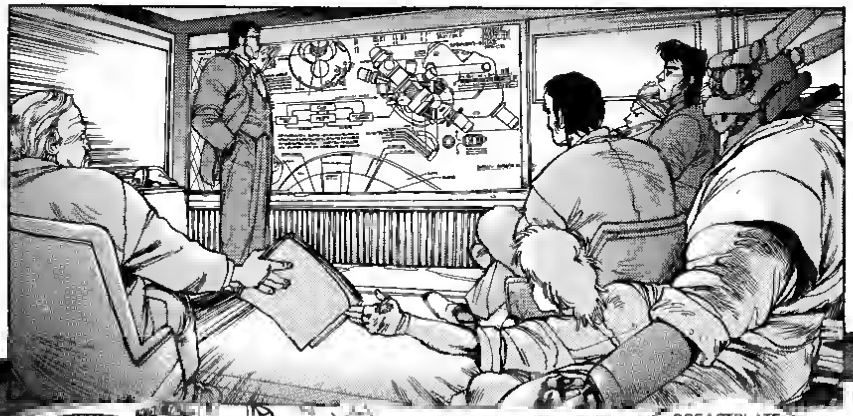
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A *CLUMSY ASS-HOLE!!*
IF THIS WAS REAL, I'D BE *DEAD* NOW!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT, PANI?!
F'CHRIST'S SAKE, YOU TWO!!
C'MON AND TRY IT!!
YOU STUCK-UP LITTLE *BITCH!!*
YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE I SHOOT!!
YOU HEARD ME!! AND YOU BETTER HEAR *THIS!* IF I EVER HAVE TO TEAM UP WITH YOU AGAIN--
SAY *WHAT?!*
YEAH?
MAGUS!
MUST NEED A SHRINK...
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT IDIOTIC BROAD SQUALLING ABOUT NOW...?

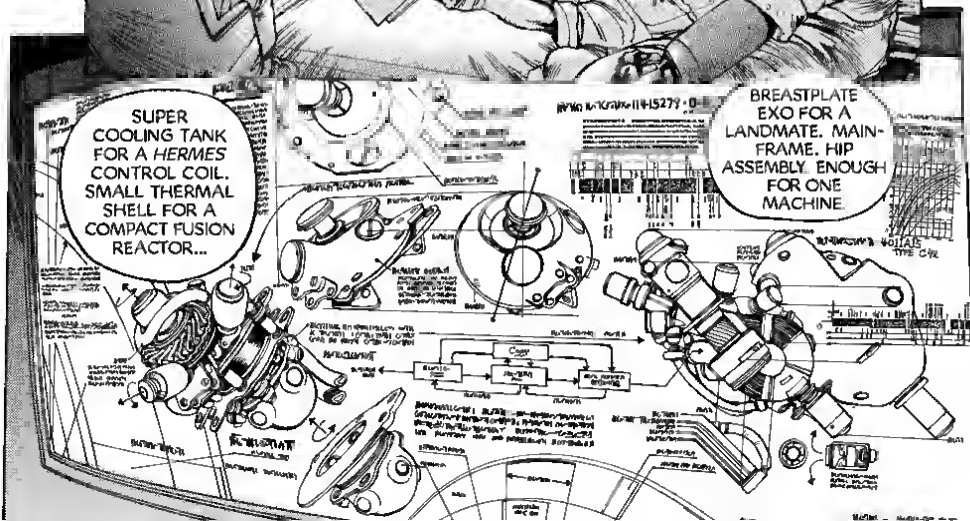
THEN WHY DID YOU SEND FOUR MEN TO CERTAIN DEATH? HUH?
SO I'D ONLY LOSE FOUR MEN INSTEAD OF FIVE.
POP
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GO THROUGH THE WINDOW WITH *FIVE* MEN! WHY DID YOU IGNORE MY ORDERS?!
AW, C'MON... I GOT A DATE...!
WHA--? RIGHT NOW?!
BE AT BRIEFING ROOM C4 IN TEN MINUTES. THE COLONEL'S WAITING, SO *MOVE IT!*
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF COMEDY ACT WAS THAT?! DO IT AGAIN! *FROM THE TOP!!*
AREN'T WE DONE YET?
SHUDDUP!

4. プロメデウスの大天秤

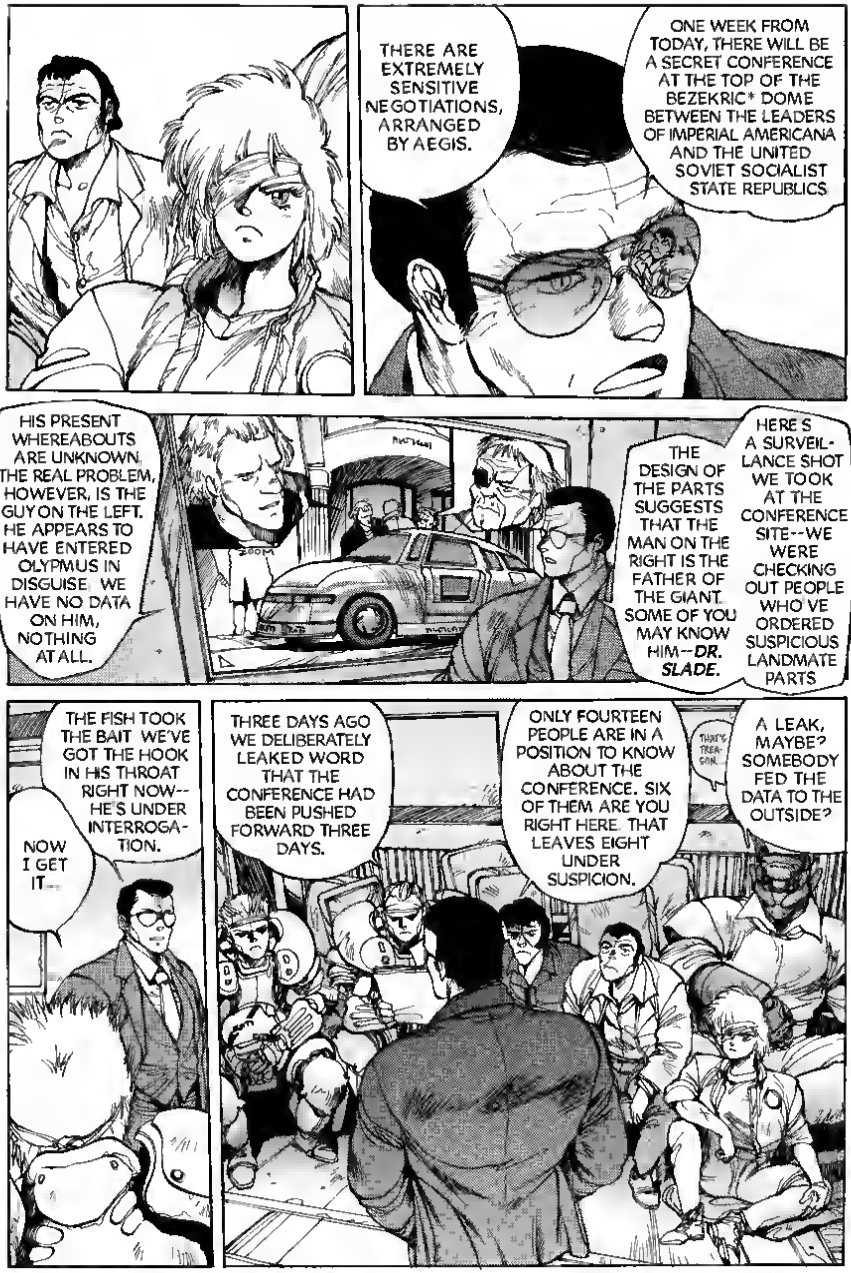
TWO DAYS AGO, A MAN CONTACTED OUR SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS BUREAU AT HEADQUARTERS ASKING FOR HELP.
SO WE MADE THE SWAP, AND NINETY MINUTES LATER HIS FAMILY WAS RELEASED. THEY'RE SAFE.
HE'S THE HEAD OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT *BEZEKRIC TECHNICA*. HIS FAMILY HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED AND THE CRIMINALS WERE DEMANDING THAT HE PRODUCE A SET OF PARTS IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LIVES.
TECHNO-BANDITS?
AS FOR SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS... SIR?
PAY 'EM LIKE SHIT. USE 'EM LIKE TOILET PAPER.
THE PARTS WERE LOADED INTO EIGHT VANS, BUT TWENTY MINUTES AGO WE LOST TRACK OF THE VANS AND THE TWO INVESTIGATORS THAT HAD BEEN TRACKING IT.
LABORATORY
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, THE CRIMINALS FOUND THE TRANSMITTERS WE PUT ON THE PARTS. BUT WE MANAGED TO KEEP A TAIL ON THEM ANYWAY.


HERE'S WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
MEANING THE FREE'S GONE TO GROUND.
AS SOON AS WE PICKED UP THE FAMILY, WE CLOSED THE DISTRICT TIGHT-- AIRPORTS, TUBES, PORT FACILITIES, ALL LOCKED DOWN.
ALL TOGETHER NOW.
SMALL ENOUGH TO LOAD INTO VANS, BUT TOO BIG TO HIDE...?
I PRESUME THESE PARTS AREN'T SOMETHING THE CRIMINALS COULD LET ANYONE SEE.

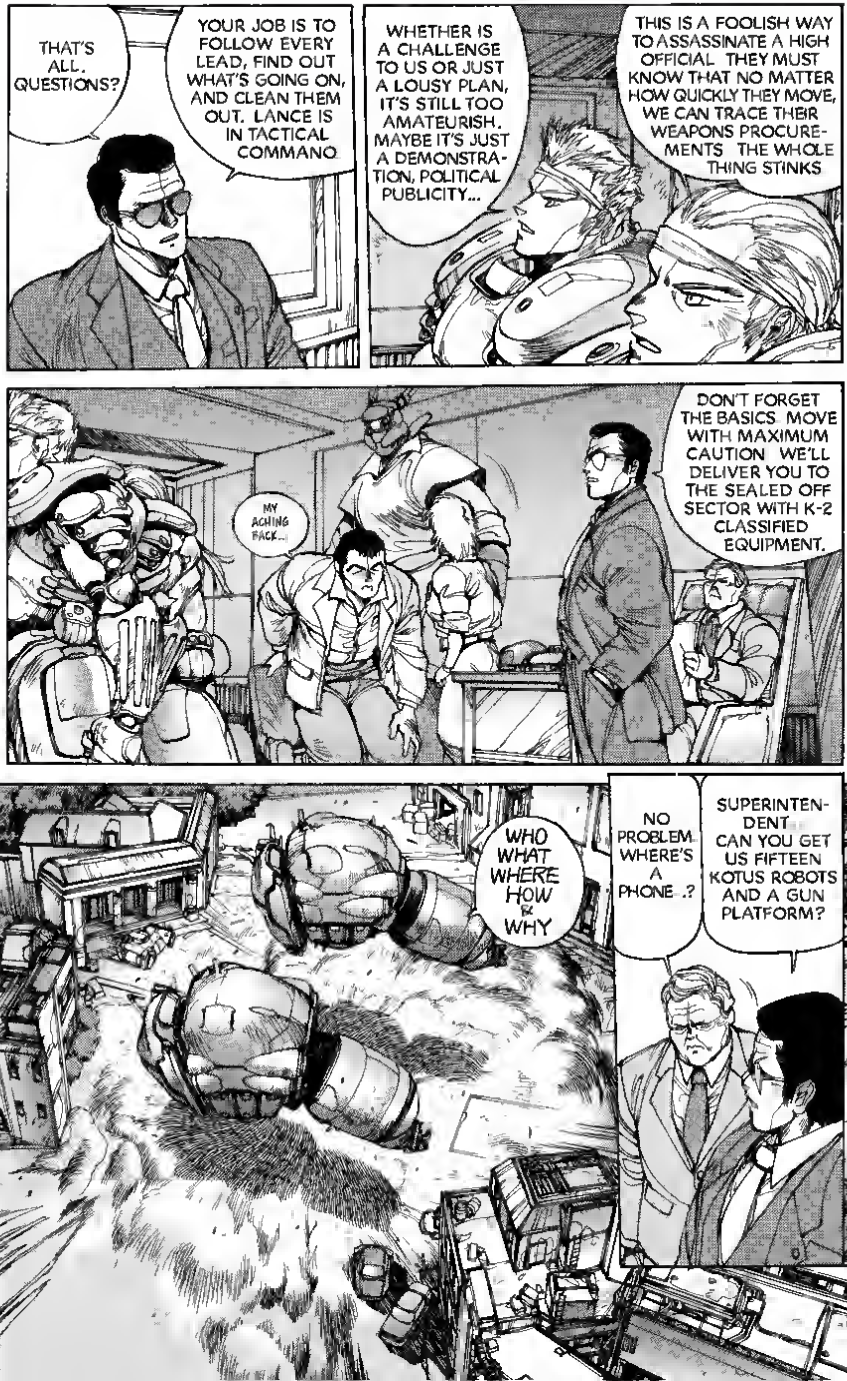



SUPER COOLING TANK FOR A *HERMES* CONTROL COIL. SMALL THERMAL SHELL FOR A COMPACT FUSION REACTOR...
BREASTPLATE EXO FOR A LANDMATE. MAIN-FRAME. HIP ASSEMBLY. ENOUGH FOR ONE MACHINE.

THIS IS NO NORMAL LANDMATE. JUDGING FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE HIP AND LEG ASSEMBLY, IT'S BEEN DESIGNED TO BE WORN BY A CYBORG.
ASSEMBLING JUST THE PARTS WE KNOW OF WOULD PUT IT OVER THIRTEEN FEET HIGH SO IT'S AT LEAST TWICE AS BIG AS A NORMAL LAND-MATE.
AND ONE MORE THING... *SIZE.*
—
LET ME EXPLAIN THE BACK-GROUND.
IF YOU HAD ACUTE APPENDICITIS, WOULD YOU ASK A *KOTUS* TO DO THE OPERATION?
OF THE TWELVE, ONLY SIX HAVE THE KIND OF SPACE AND EQUIPMENT IT WOULD TAKE TO ASSEMBLE THE GIANT.
THE FINAL ASSEMBLY AND ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURES REQUIRE LARGE AMOUNTS OF WATER AND ELECTRICITY. TWELVE LOCATIONS WITHIN THE INVESTIGA-TION AREA HAVE REGISTERED SHARP INCREASES IN WATER AND POWER CON-SUMPTION OVER THE LAST HOUR.
IF YOU'VE GOT IT PINNED DOWN THAT CLOSE, WHY NOT USE ONE OF THE ROBOT GUN PLATFORMS?


THERE ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS, ARRANGED BY AEGIS.
ONE WEEK FROM TODAY, THERE WILL BE A SECRET CONFERENCE AT THE TOP OF THE BEZEKRIC* DOME BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF IMPERIAL AMERICANA AND THE UNITED SOVIET SOCIALIST STATE REPUBLICS.
HIS PRESENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN. THE REAL PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS THE GUY ON THE LEFT. HE APPEARS TO HAVE ENTERED OLYPMUS IN DISGUISE. WE HAVE NO DATA ON HIM, NOTHING AT ALL.
THE DESIGN OF THE PARTS SUGGESTS THAT THE MAN ON THE RIGHT IS THE FATHER OF THE GIANT. SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW HIM--DR. SLADE.
HERE'S A SURVEILLANCE SHOT WE TOOK AT THE CONFERENCE SITE--WE WERE CHECKING OUT PEOPLE WHO'VE ORDERED SUSPICIOUS LANDMATE PARTS
THE FISH TOOK THE BAIT. WE'VE GOT THE HOOK IN HIS THROAT RIGHT NOW--HE'S UNDER INTERROGATION.
NOW I GET IT...
THREE DAYS AGO WE DELIBERATELY LEAKED WORD THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD BEEN PUSHED FORWARD THREE DAYS.
ONLY FOURTEEN PEOPLE ARE IN A POSITION TO KNOW ABOUT THE CONFERENCE. SIX OF THEM ARE YOU RIGHT HERE. THAT LEAVES EIGHT UNDER SUSPICION.
THAT'S TREASON.
A LEAK, MAYBE? SOMEBODY FED THE DATA TO THE OUTSIDE?

*"Bezekric"—or "the beautifully built house"—is the arcology complex and district in Olympus housing most embassies and public offices.


THAT'S ALL. QUESTIONS?
YOUR JOB IS TO FOLLOW EVERY LEAD, FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, AND CLEAN THEM OUT. LANCE IS IN TACTICAL COMMAND
WHETHER IS A CHALLENGE TO US OR JUST A LOUSY PLAN, IT'S STILL TOO AMATEURISH. MAYBE IT'S JUST A DEMONSTRATION, POLITICAL PUBLICITY...
THIS IS A FOOLISH WAY TO ASSASSINATE A HIGH OFFICIAL. THEY MUST KNOW THAT NO MATTER HOW QUICKLY THEY MOVE, WE CAN TRACE THEIR WEAPONS PROCUREMENTS. THE WHOLE THING STINKS
MY ACHING BACK...
DON'T FORGET THE BASICS. MOVE WITH MAXIMUM CAUTION. WE'LL DELIVER YOU TO THE SEALED OFF SECTOR WITH K-2 CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT.
WHO WHAT WHERE HOW & WHY
NO PROBLEM. WHERE'S A PHONE..?
SUPERINTENDENT... CAN YOU GET US FIFTEEN KOTUS ROBOTS AND A GUN PLATFORM?

*FX: VWHSSHH
*FX: SHH SHH
BAM
BAM
FX: KYU KYU KYU KYU
*FX: VNN VNN
*FX: SSSSS
YEAH, A BIT.
DOES IT HURT?
GET YOUR ASS IN GEAR!!
...

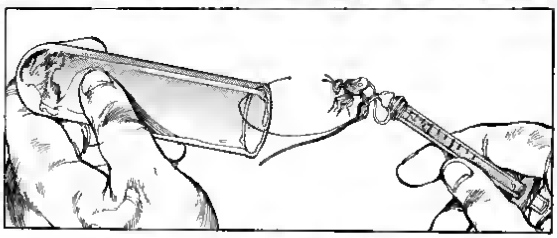
?
LANCE!
WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM?
LANCE!
I REALLY WONDER IF THAT GUY HAS A HEART OR SOUL. I DON'T FEEL A THING FROM HIM-- IT'S WEIRD
WHY DON'T YOU USE ME?
THAT IDIOT!
I WANT THE LAND-MATES ON STANDBY ONLY--DON'T MOVE THEM WITHOUT DIRECT ORDERS FROM ME
YOU TELLIN' ME YOU TRUST LITTLE GIRLS AND THOSE FRIGGIN' BIOROIDS MORE THAN *ME*?

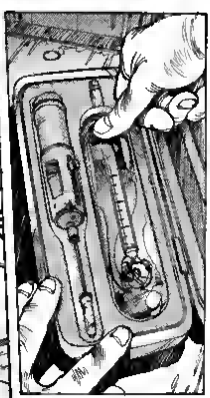
MORTON!
DAMMIT, LAN--
YOU'RE ASSIGNED TO COVER JIOLA AVENUE. USE A GUGES D.
LANCE!!
JUST WAIT, WILL YOU?
PANI!
IT'S NOTHING. FORGET IT

GETTIN' A LITTLE FULL DF YDURSELF, AIN'T YOU BDY? FIRST YOU TALK ME INTD A DATE, AND THEN YOU STAND ME UP, NDW YOU WANT METD WDRK THE NIGHT SHIFT?
AW, C'MON-- YDU KNDW WHAT I MEAN. DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK!
HEY, JUST HDLD ON A SECDND HERE! WHAT THE HELL DD YDU MEAN BY THAT?!
*WHAAT?
I WANT YOU TD, Y'KNDW, TAKE CARE DF MDRTDN CDULD YOU DD THAT FDR ME?
*FX VREEEE
HRMMPH!
DO IT FDR ME, HONEY!
GDD-DAMN IT, MAGUS!!
FX VVN VVN VVN VVN
*FX VVVNNNN
OKAY, OKAY!
YDU GDNNA PAY ME DVER-TIME?!
DAMN YDU, MAGUS!
*FX VVNN
OW.
FWEEL

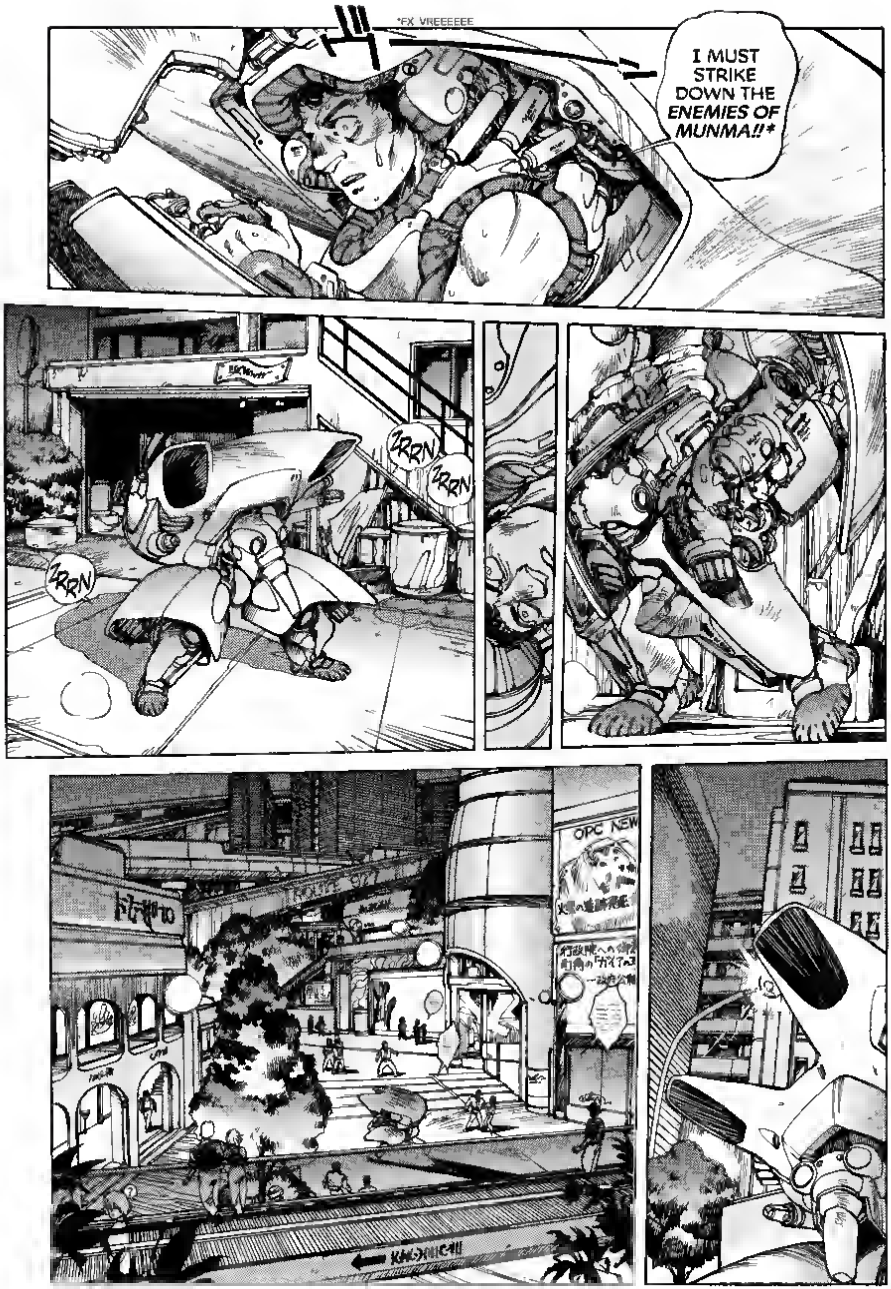
MY PATCH? OR MY MAN?
VERY BECOM-ING.
MAY BE A TRAP, EH?
THE SLICK WAY THE S.I. BOYS TRACKED THE PIGEONS AND THE SLOPPY WAY THEY HANDLED THE HOSTAGE/ WEAPONS SWAP...THEY JUST DON'T MESH.
THE CRIMINALS MAY BE PLANNING TO SET UP SOME POOR SAPS FROM NOWHERE AS THEIR FALL GUYS. IN THAT CASE, WE EITHER STAKE THEM OUT AND SETTLE IN FOR THE LONG HAUL OR WE TURN UP THE HEAT UNDER THEM NOW.
KSHH
GOOD QUES-TION
FX WHSST
PERPS OR S.I.?
FIVE TWELVE ROUND CLIPS OF 10MM A/P, PLUS ONE UP THE SPOUT
yeah
PLAIN-CLOTHES INVESTIGA-TION FIRST. IF THE QUARRY CHANGES COURSE, WE COVER HIM IN DEPTH.

ALL THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ARE LIKE THAT. WHAT THEY DON'T HAVE IS MONEY. THIS WHOLE OP COULD BE AN AEGIS-BACKED DIPLOMATIC PLOY.
STILL, I LIKE THE WAY THEY'RE PICKING A FIGHT WITH OLYMPUS AND BOTH AMERICAS STRAIGHT ON. YOU GOTTA GIVE 'EM CREDIT FOR BALLS.
SHKK
FX SHUK
THE SOVIETS AND BOTH THE AMERICAS ARE GOING STRAIGHT DOWN THE TUBES.
BRIBERY, CORRUPTION, SLOTH, DIVORCE, ALCOHOLISM, DRUG ABUSE...
SHAK
KLIK
FX KLIK
IT'S THE AGE OF IMPOTENT SUPER-POWERS...

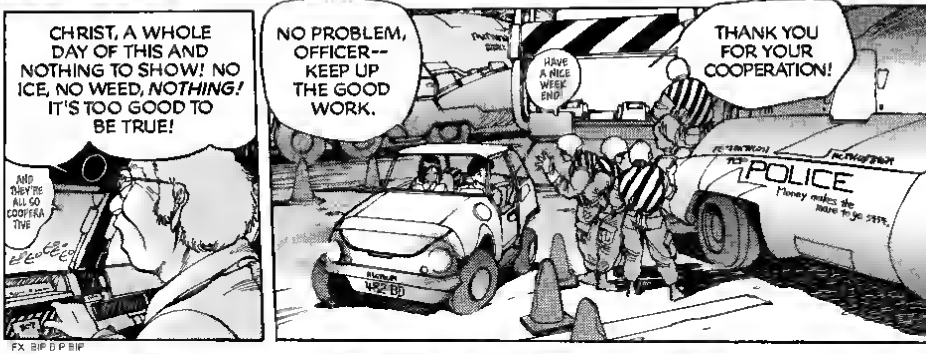




HA HA!
*FX: KTHMP KTHMP KTHMP KTHMP
*FX: SPRING
I... MUST FIGHT!
*FX: THMP
*FX: KSSH



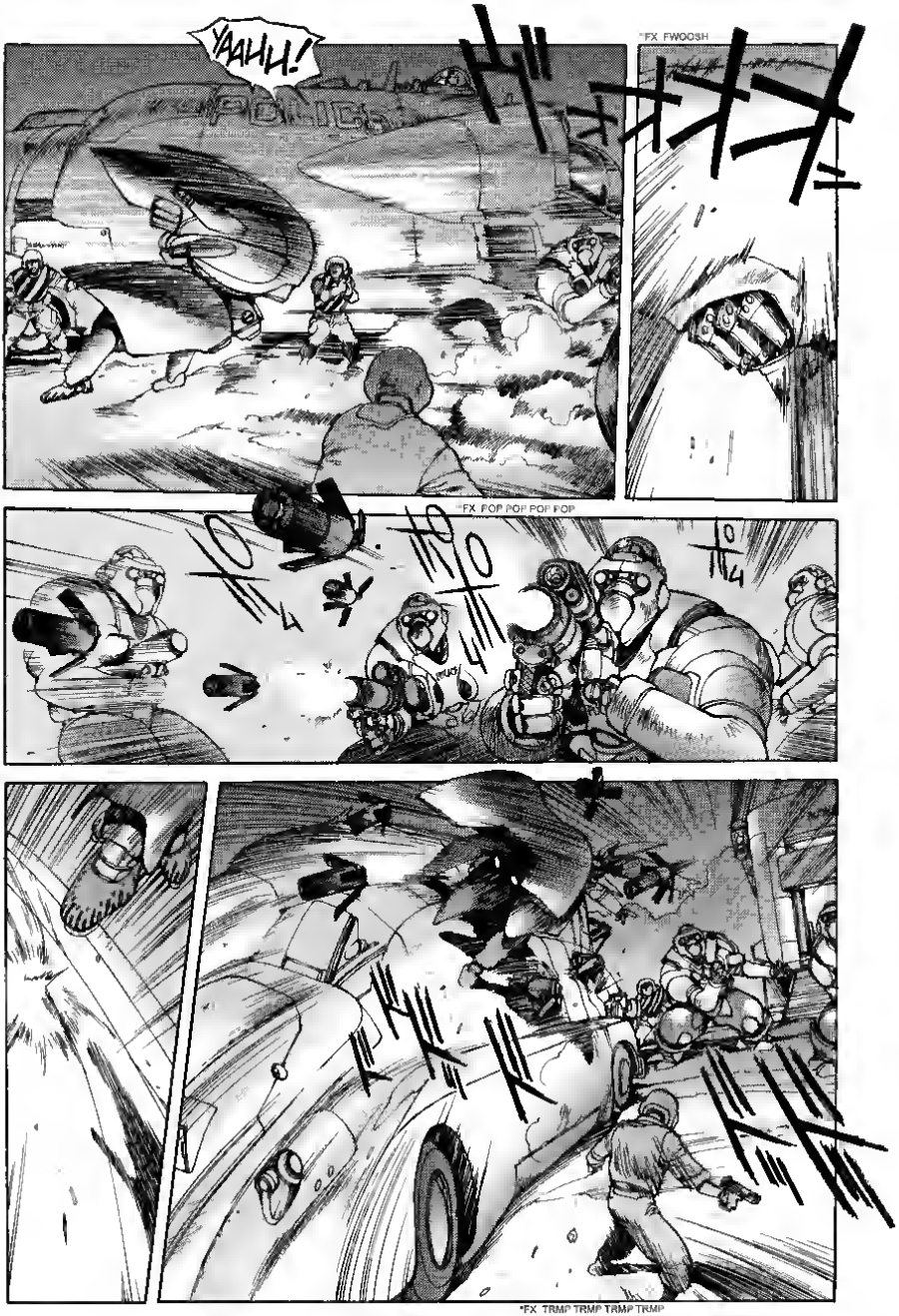
To wit: the Islamic Republic of Iran (still recovering from debilitating wars of succession), the "Great Devils" (old superpowers) the Kurds, and all forces operating within them. The Munma Holy Republic has political ties with Poseidon. Unconfirmed reports credit Munma with nuclear weapons capability.


CHRIST, A WHOLE DAY OF THIS AND NOTHING TO SHOW! NO ICE, NO WEED, *NOTHING!* IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!
AND THEY'RE ALL SO COOPERATIVE
NO PROBLEM, OFFICER-- KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.
HAVE A NICE WEEK END!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
POLICE
Money makes the world go round

FX BIP BIP BIP

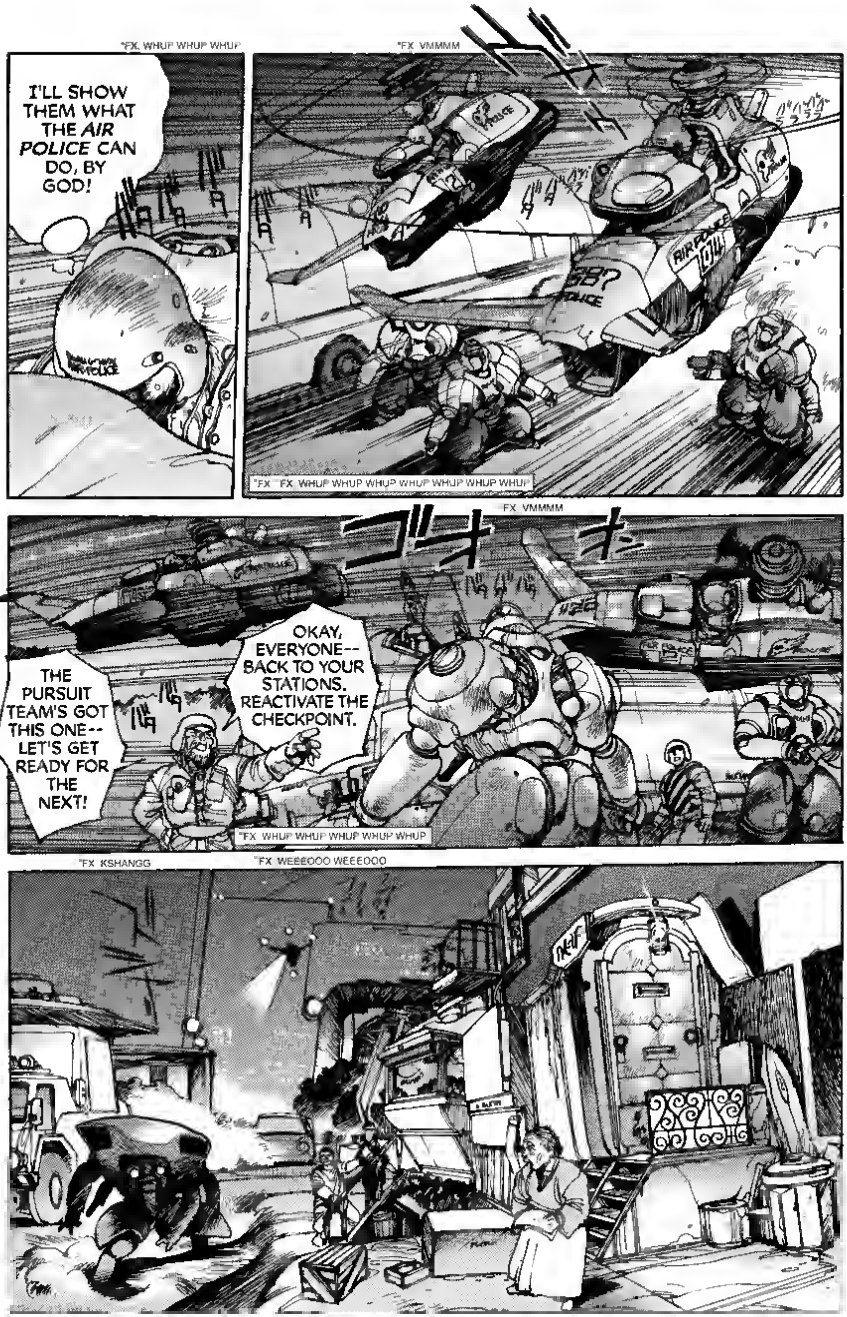
PUT THE LAND-MATES ON FULL ALERT! WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
CAPTAIN!
AND THOSE BIO-ROIDS DON'T DO DRUGS AT ALL...
THE ONLY ILLEGAL LANDMATES WERE JUST HOT-RODDED SPORTS MODELS...
FX SKRANGG
POLICE

POLICE
POLICE
*FX: SHUUU SHUUU!
COME IN HQ! CHECK-POINT 24 CALLING WITH A CODE M!!
YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS TO COMPLY!!
USE OF LAND-MATES ON PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES IS A CRIMINAL VIOLATION! POP YOUR SUIT AND COME OUT SLOWLY!
HOLD YOUR FIRE-- RICOCHETS COULD END UP IN THE CIVVIE HOUSING!
HAH?
SET THE MAGNETIC MINES!!
POLICE 1-32
POLICE 1-32
POLICE
FUU...

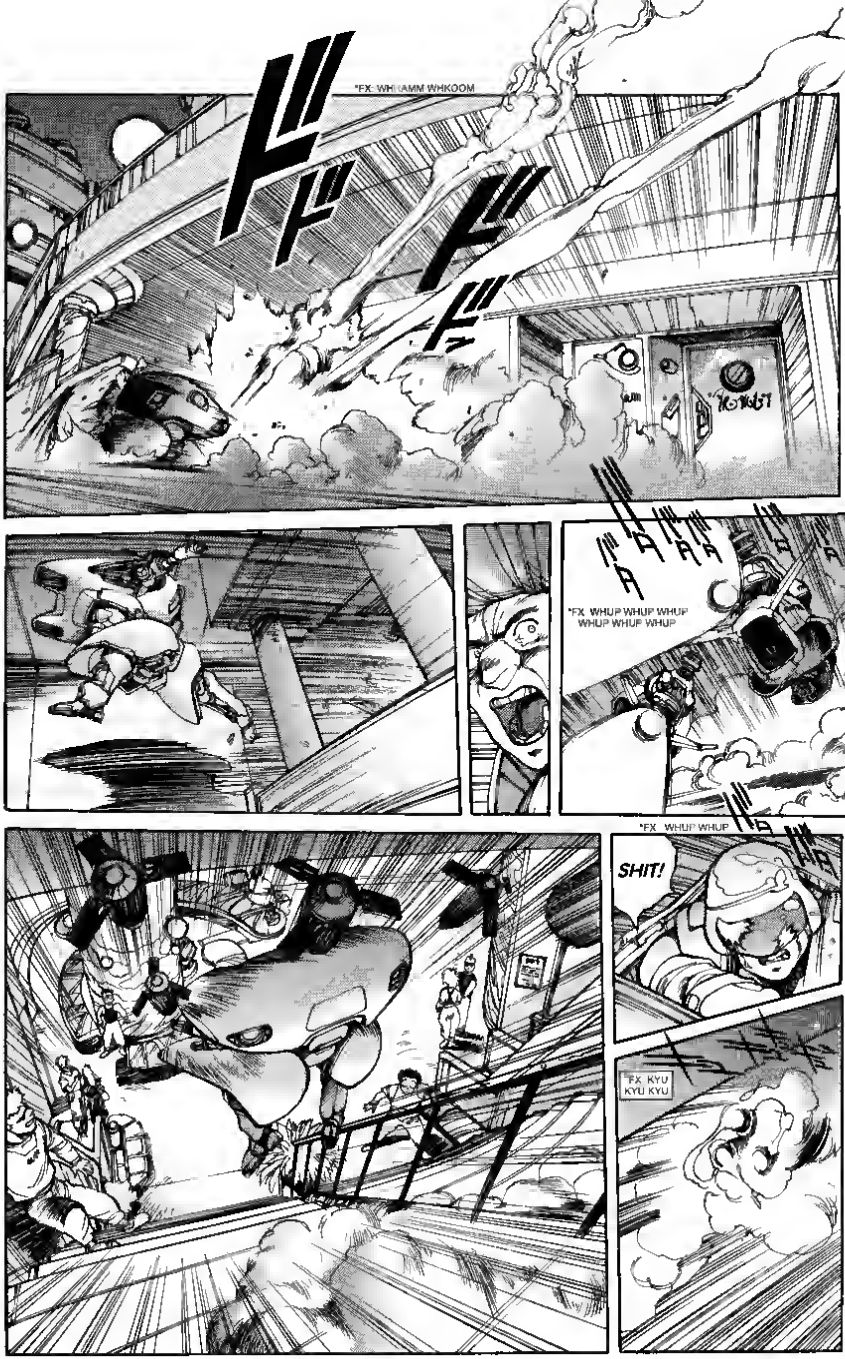

YAAHH!
*FX FWOOSH
*FX POP POP POP POP
*FX TRMP TRMP TRMP TRMP

*FX SHIINK
*FX SKIIANGG

*Search and Strike Armor: an intelligent missile that searches for targets matching pre-programmed criteria. Uses IFF codes to avoid friendly forces


*FX: WHUP WHUP WHUP
I'LL SHOW THEM WHAT THE AIR POLICE CAN DO, BY GOD!
*FX: VMMMM
*FX: FX: WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
*FX: VMMMM
THE PURSUIT TEAM'S GOT THIS ONE-- LET'S GET READY FOR THE NEXT!
OKAY, EVERYONE-- BACK TO YOUR STATIONS. REACTIVATE THE CHECKPOINT.
*FX: WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
*FX: KSHANGG
*FX: WEEEOOO WEEEOOO

POW!
*FX WHSSS
FX CHNK CHNK
*FX BEEP BEEP BEEP
*FX VWOMM
FX SKSSHH
*FX KYU
*FX WHOOSSHH


*FX WHHAMM WHKOOM
ドゥ
ドゥ
ドゥ
*FX WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
*FX WHUP WHUP
SHIT!
*FX KYU KYU KYU

CHRIST, I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT CRUMMY PIECE OF JUNK EVADED THE CREAM OF THE AIR POLICE?!
THE WORLD AIN'T FAIR!
*FX WHOK
*FX FWOOSSH
TARGET EVADED ALL WEAPONS!
AIR UNIT ZERO FOUR TO CHECK-POINT TWENTY-FOUR!
TRACK THE QUARRY BUT DO NOT, REPEAT, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO APPREHEND!
ATTENTION ALL UNITS! THIS IS CENTRAL HQ!
POLICE
THE TARGET EVADED ALL THE SASAM ROUNDS AND IS CURRENTLY FLEEING THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND MALL, BEARING 2-5-0! DISPOSAL TEAM NEEDED!*
CLICK
CHECKPOINT TWENTY-FOUR HERE-- SAY AGAIN, ZERO FOUR!

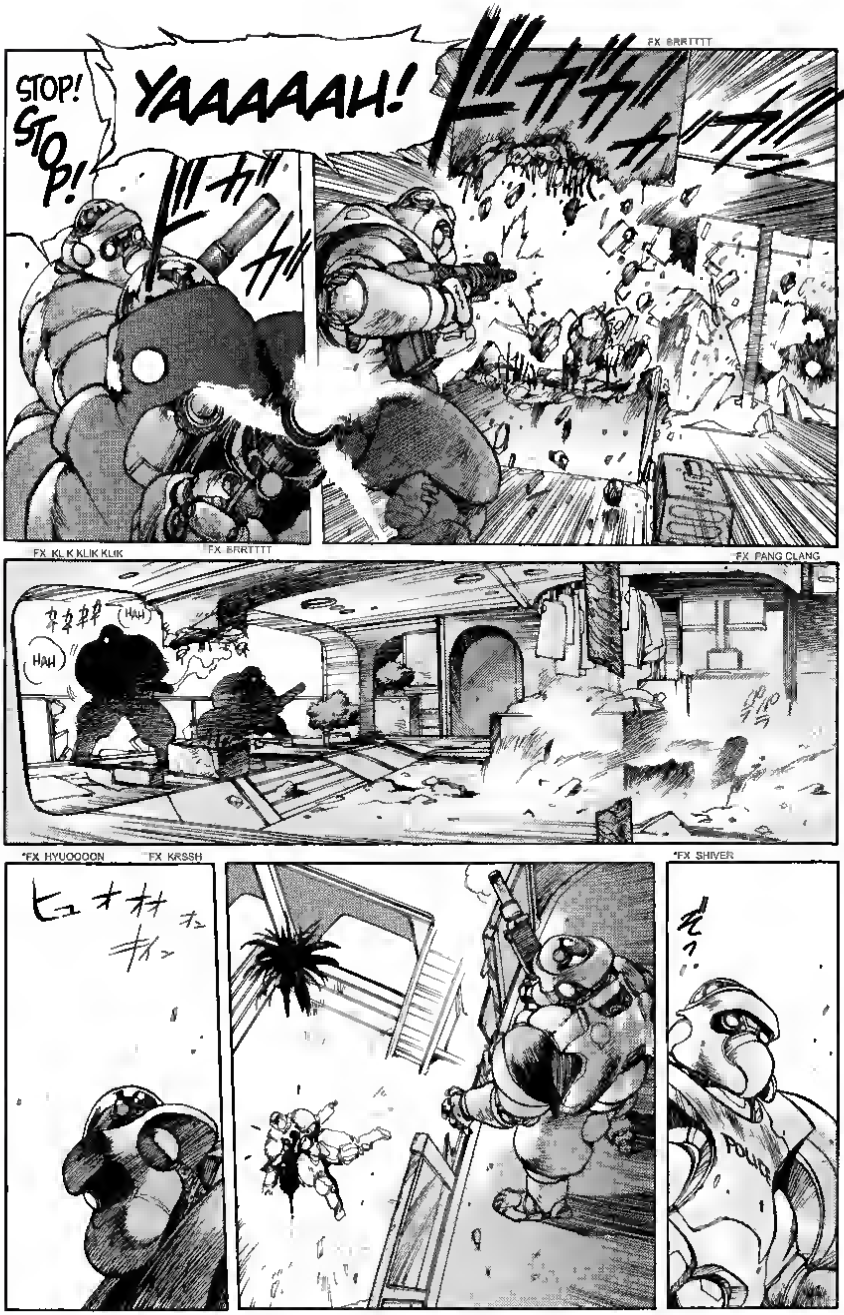
*SASAM warheads that miss their targets are designed to become mines. This function is deactivated for use by urban police units. When launched without specific targeting information, SASAM top-attack projectiles prioritize by target size. The missiles are also capable of measuring the force of impact with their target, making a microsecond decision as to which detonation method will best penetrate the armor encountered.

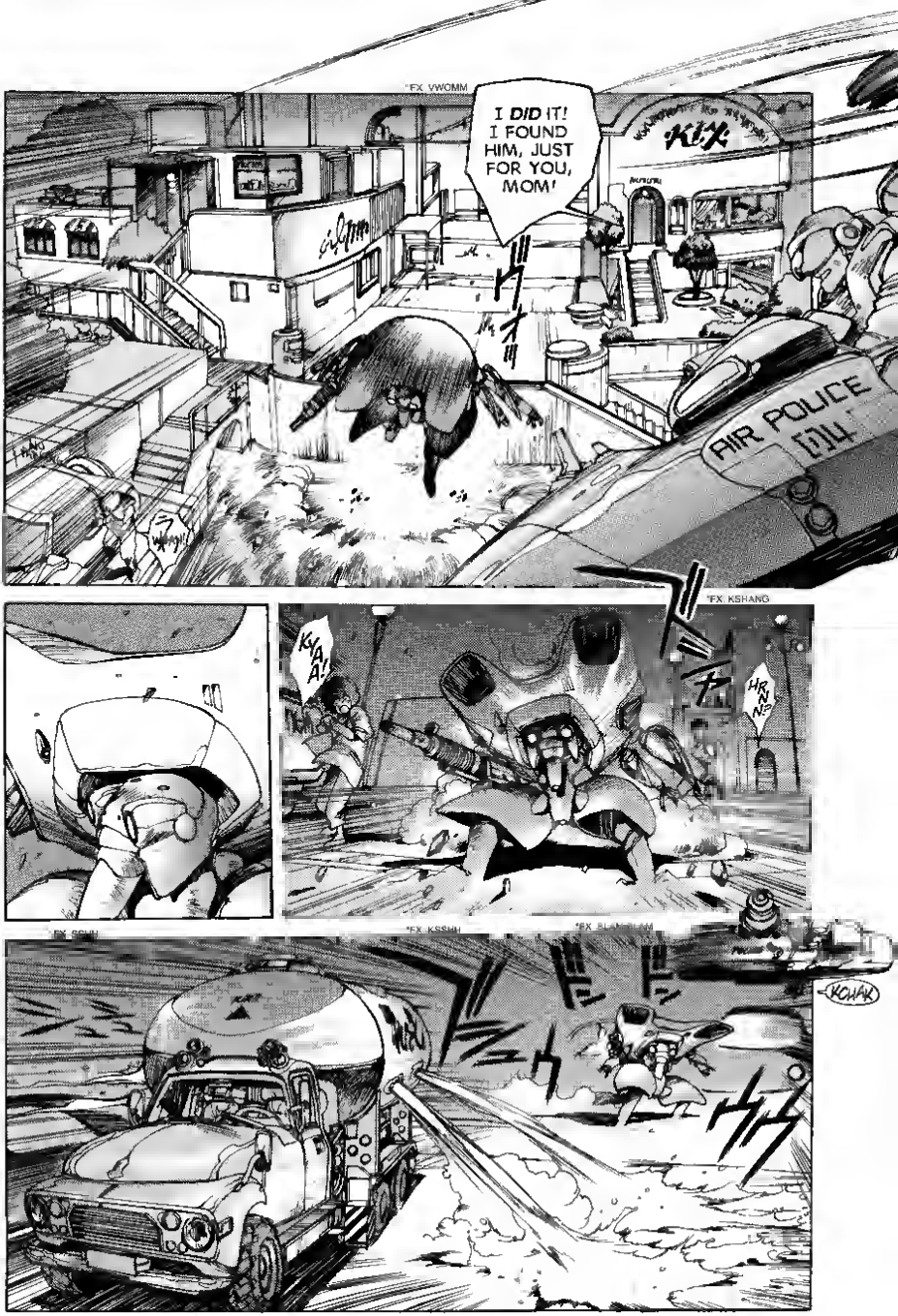
BRIAREOS! DEUNAN!
BRING HIM IN, BUT DON'T KILL HIM--THAT'S TOP PRIORITY!
WHAT?!
COME ON--HE'S GOT TO BE A DECOY! IT'S CRAZY TO SEND ESWAT AFTER A DECOY!
GODDAMN IT, DEUNAN! GET YOUR ASS IN GEAR!!
FX KSSHH
HMPH!
IDIOT!
I WANTED TO BE IN ON NABBING THE RING-LEADERS!
GSHHT
WITH THAT EYE?
BEEP
FX VREEEE
STILL, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE US, DOES IT?
THEN WHO ELSE, HMM?
YOU TELL ME--OF THE SEVEN OF US IN THIS SHIP, ONLY YOU AND I HAVE BEEN TRAINED FOR TWO-MAN OPS.

UMPH
YOU'VE GOT A HANDICAP, SO BE CAREFUL, OKAY?
LOW ALTITUDE TURBULENCE IS PRETTY BAD TODAY, SO WATCH IT.
WE'LL SEND YOU VIDEO FOOTAGE OF THE TARGET WHILE YOU'RE DESCENDING
*FX KSSH
...I'LL BE FINE!
DON'T WORRY...
EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW.
OH, YEAH? NO KIDDING?
I'LL FALL BACK AND GIVE YOU COVER. ON YOUR LEFT.
DAMMIT, DEUNAN! I WISH YOU'D QUIT ACTING LIKE THAT-- CAN'T YOU GIVE OTHER PEOPLE A LITTLE MORE CREDIT?
BET IT'S ONLY THE GUYS ON MY RIGHT WHO ARE WORRIED!
*FX KCHAK

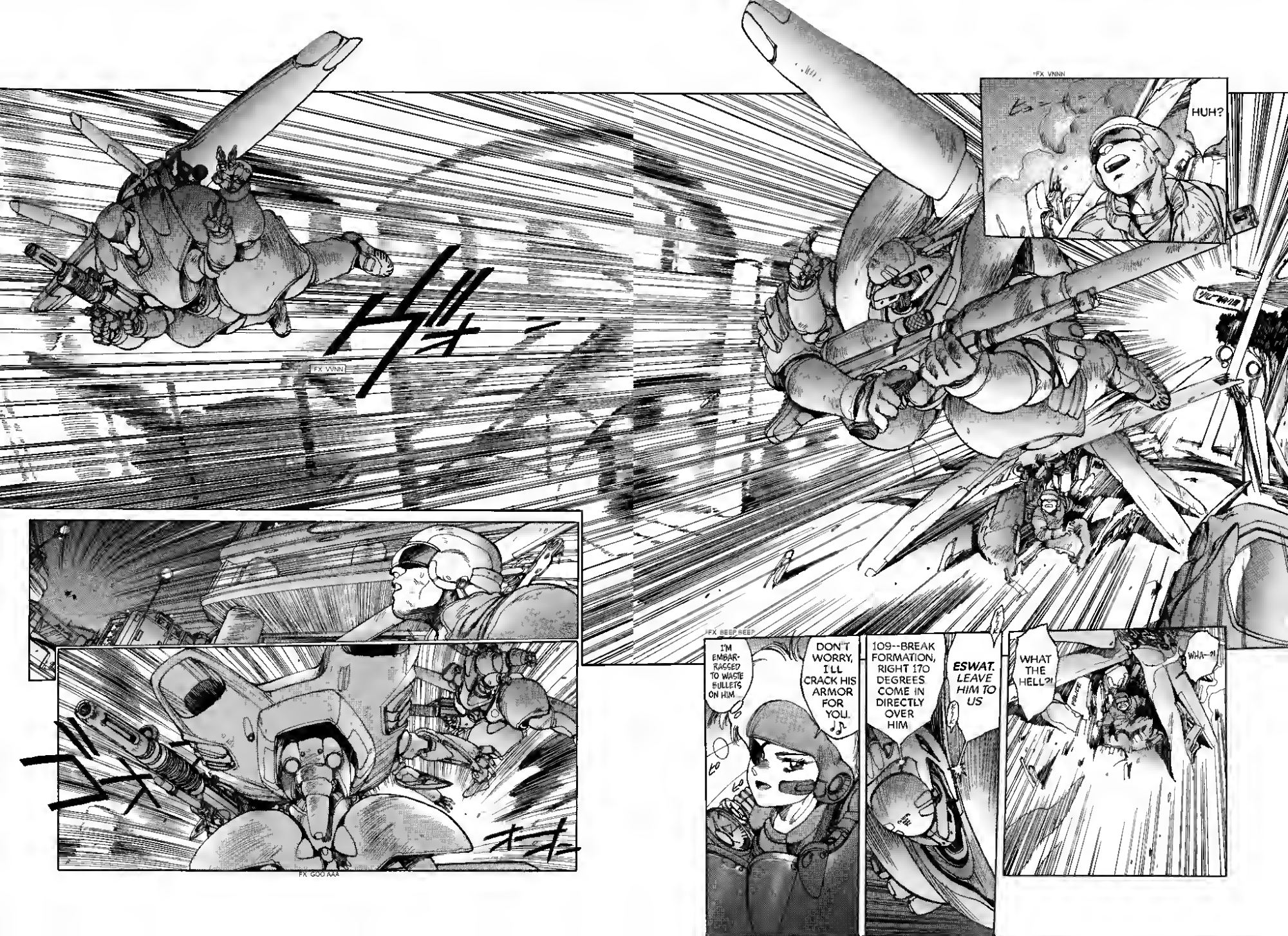
I WON'T FORGET TO WIN! YOUR WATCH!
FX
FX 2SSH
SHALL WE GO?
THEY'LL BE EVEN BRIGHTER IN A FEW MINUTES.
STARS ARE PRETTY TONIGHT

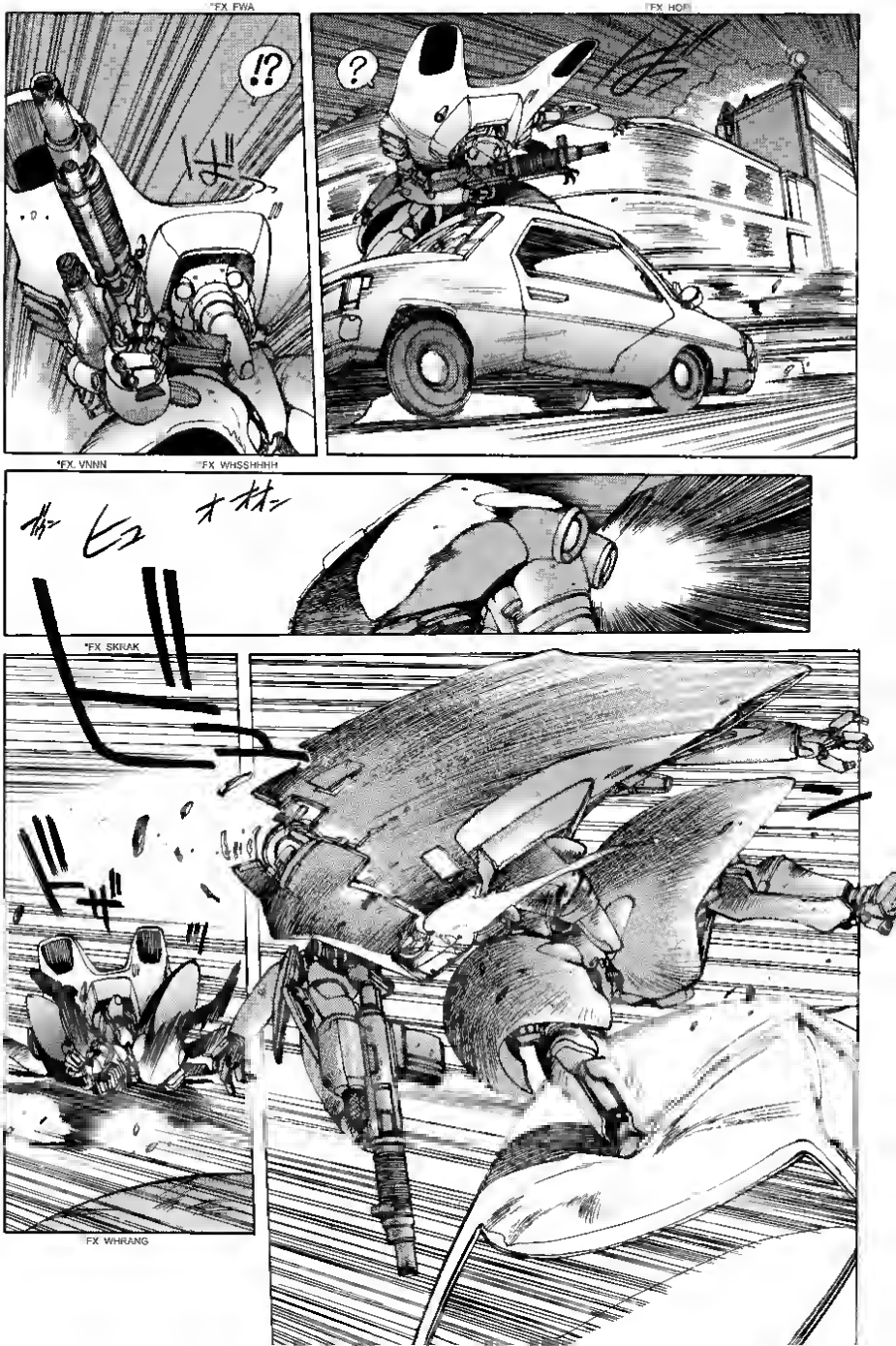
I FIGURED IF I JOINED *AEGIS* I WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS KIND OF CRAP WORK.
SHEEIT!
YEAH, ME TOO.
STILL, WE GOT IT BETTER THAN THE PRECINCTS
HEY!
POLICE
*FX ŌKOOM
FOR PEE

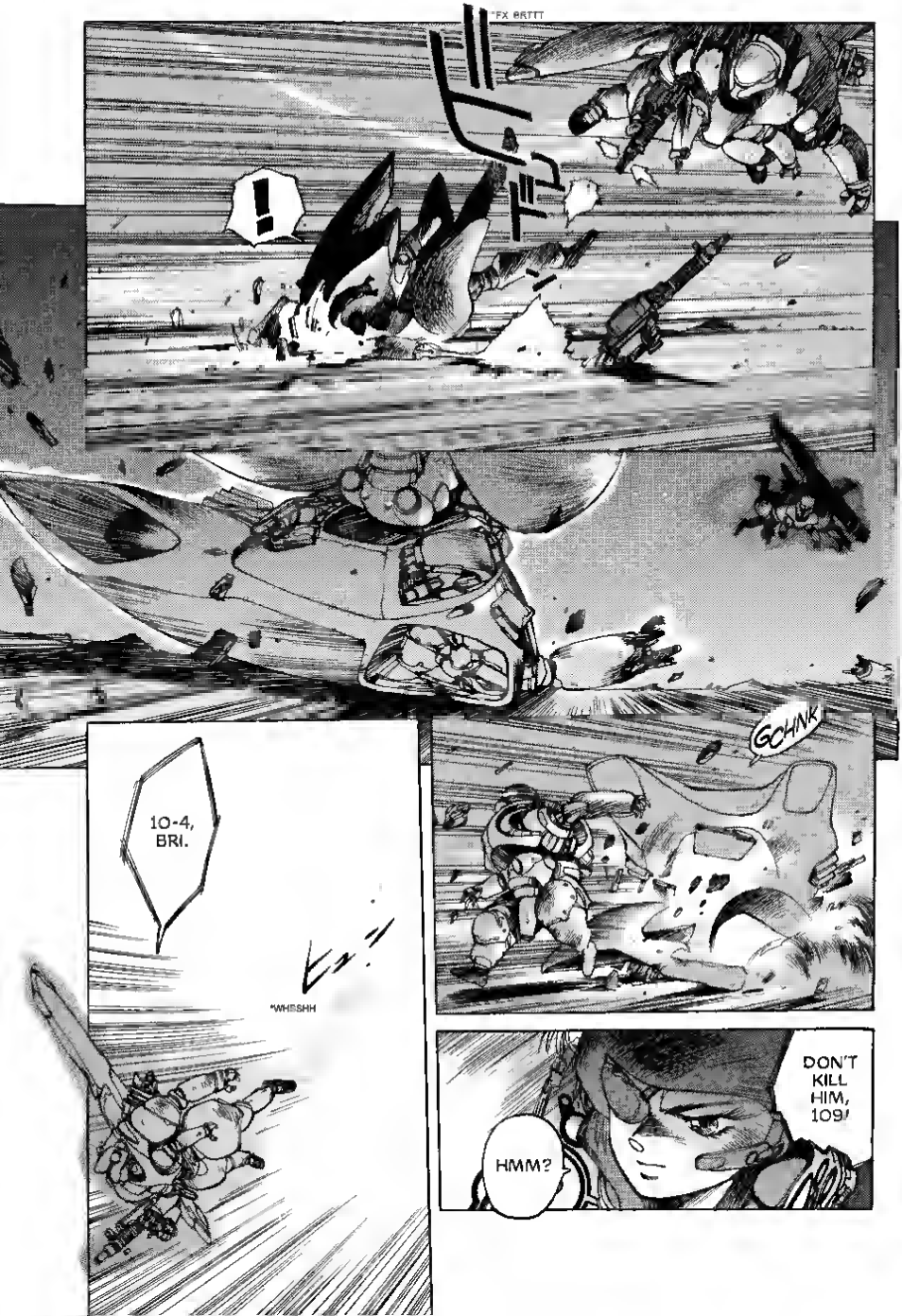

STOP!
STOP!
YAAAAAH!
FX: BRRTTTT
FX: KL K KLIK KLIK
FX: BRRTTTT
FX: PANG CLANG
HAH
HAH
*FX: HYUOOOON
FX: KRSSH
*FX: SHIVER
POLICE


*FX. VWOMM
I DID IT! I FOUND HIM, JUST FOR YOU, MOM!
AIR POLICE
*FX. KSHANG
KYA A!
HRN N!
*FX. KSSHH
*FX. KLANGKLANG
KCHAK

*FX KCHAK
NO! DON'T SHOOT, YOU IDIOT!!
*FX BLAM
FX KANG
WHA-?!
FX SKRASH
GYAA!
WAAAH! I'M SORRY, COM-MANDER ARLESS!
*FX KSSHHHH


FX VVNN
FX GOO AAA
FX VNNN
HUH?
FX BEEP BEEP
I'M EMBARRASSED TO WASTE BULLETS ON HIM...
DON'T WORRY, I'LL CRACK HIS ARMOR FOR YOU.
109--BREAK FORMATION, RIGHT 170 DEGREES COME IN DIRECTLY OVER HIM
ESWAT. LEAVE HIM TO US
WHAT THE HELL?!
WHA--?!

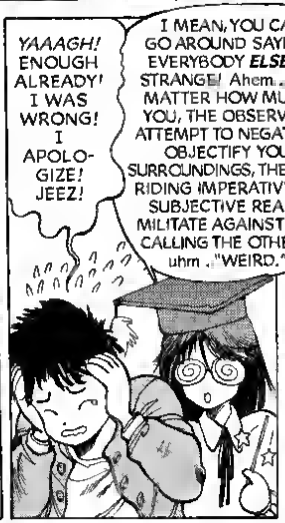

FX. FWA
!?
FX. HOH
?
FX. VNNN
FX. WHSSHHHH
FX. SKRAK
FX. WHRANG


*FX BRTTT
!
GCHNK
10-4, BRI.
*WHSSHH
DON'T KILL HIM, 109!
HMM?

DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
HOTEL HIGH
HOTEL LUDENE
Te Rehoo

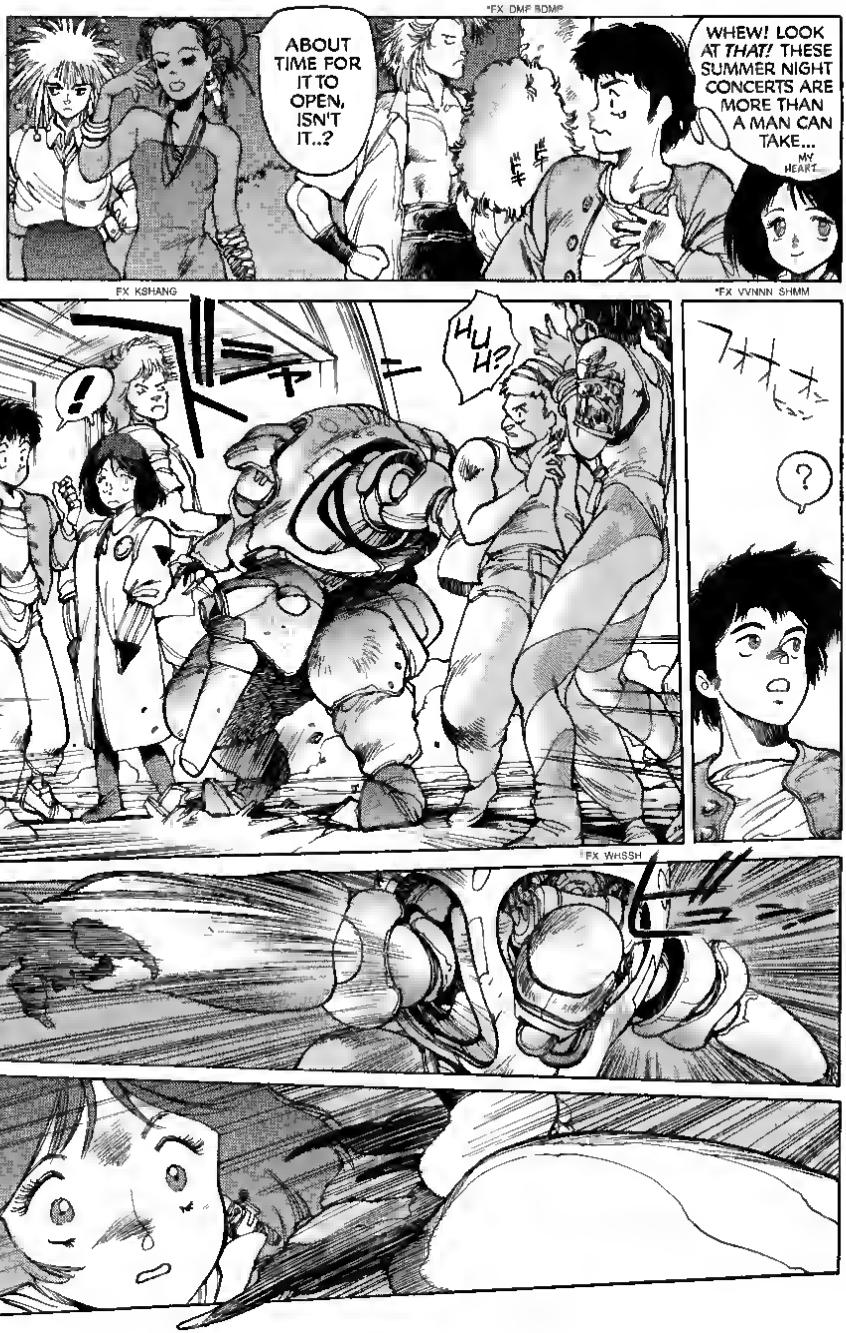
EVERYONE'S A WEIRDO...
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL--ALL THESE PEOPLE!
MORE LIKE CONSTRUCTION NOISE, DON'T YOU THINK?
AN ACCIDENT, MAYBE?

YOU JUST SHOULDN'T TALK LIKE THE IMPERIAL AMERICANA PROPAGANDA MEDIA, THAT'S ALL!
RIGHT?

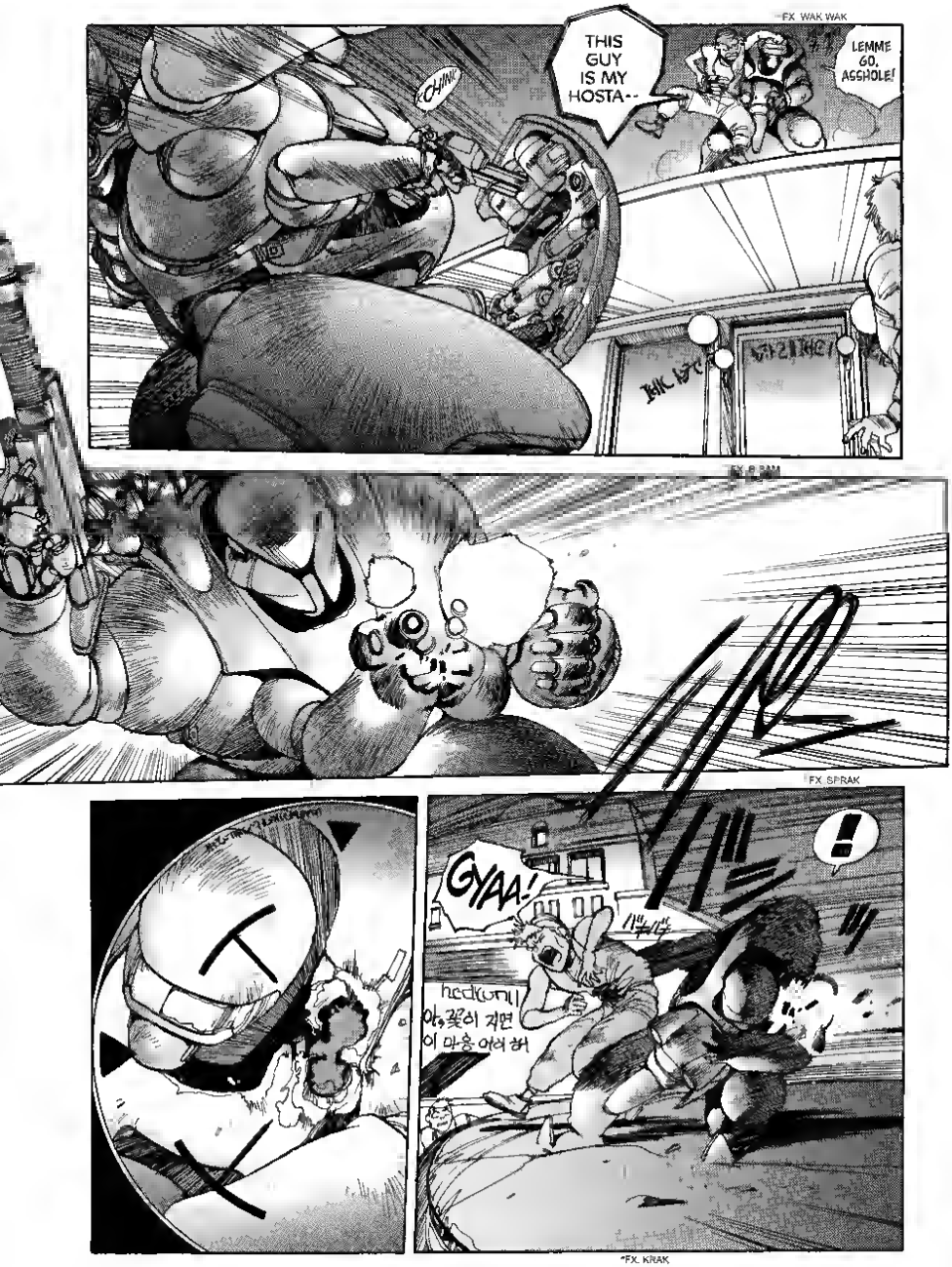

YAAAGH! ENOUGH ALREADY! I WAS WRONG! I APOLOGIZE! JEEZ!
I MEAN, YOU CAN'T GO AROUND SAYING EVERYBODY ELSE IS STRANGE! Ahem. NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU, THE OBSERVER, ATTEMPT TO NEGATIVELY OBJECTIFY YOUR SURROUNDINGS, THE OVERRIDING IMPERATIVES OF SUBJECTIVE REALITY MILITATE AGAINST ONE CALLING THE OTHER... uhm.. "WEIRD."

I DON'T KNOW, YOSHI-- AREN'T YOU THE STRANGE ONE HERE, THE ONE THAT DOESN'T FIT IN?
EEP!
FX TWITCH

HMMM


*FX DMF BDMF
ABOUT TIME FOR IT TO OPEN, ISN'T IT..?
WHEW! LOOK AT THAT! THESE SUMMER NIGHT CONCERTS ARE MORE THAN A MAN CAN TAKE...
MY HEART
FX KSHANG
!
HUH?
*FX VVNNN SHMM
?
FX WHSSH

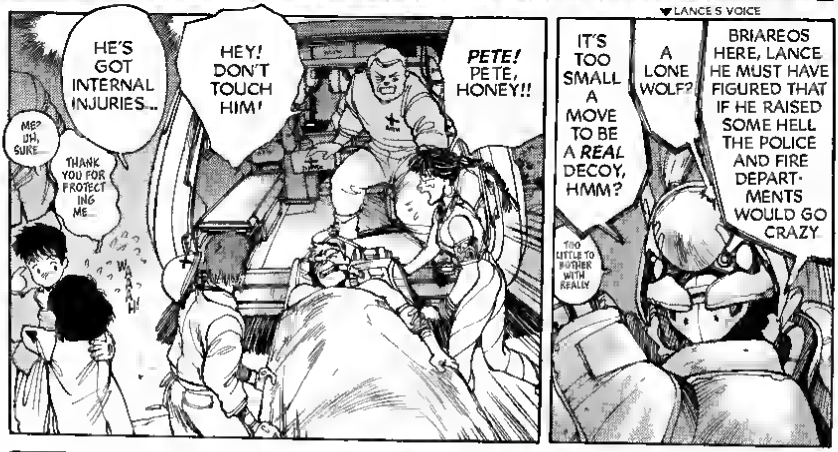
*FX SKRANGG
AIIEE!
*FX WHSSH
*FX GCHNK
*FX KSHHHH
EEEK!

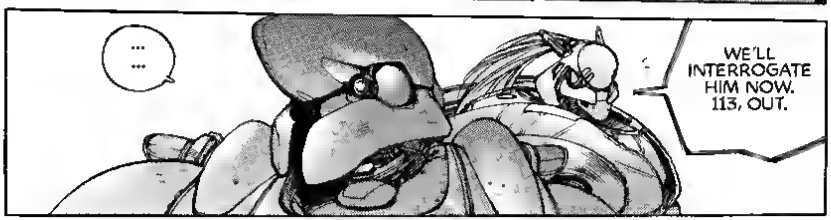

*FX. WAK WAK
THIS GUY IS MY HOSTA--
LEMME GO, ASSHOLE!
*CHINK
*FX. SPRAK
GYAA!
!
*FX. KRAK

AAGH!
*KPAAK
ELECTRO-THERM
FX: WHNNN
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I *GAVE* YOU TWO SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO STRETCH FOR A GOOD BITING ANGLE.*
YOU MADE *TWO* HOLES, 109! I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH TO USE!
FZZZAKK
WELL, *SCREW* YOU!
GEE, THANKS.

*Biting angle: The angle necessary for projectile penetration rather than ricochet. Perpendicular is optimum, minimum depends on armor and projectile.

HOUNDS
POLICE
POLICE
POLICE


HE'S GOT INTERNAL INJURIES...
HEY! DON'T TOUCH HIM!
PETE! PETE, HONEY!!
ME? UH, SURE...
THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING ME...
WAAH!
LANCE'S VOICE
IT'S TOO SMALL A MOVE TO BE A REAL DECOY, HMM?
A LONE WOLF?
BRIAREOS HERE, LANCE HE MUST HAVE FIGURED THAT IF HE RAISED SOME HELL THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS WOULD GO CRAZY
TOO LITTLE TO BOTHER WITH REALLY


...
...
WE'LL INTERROGATE HIM NOW. 113, OUT.

YES, SIR!
ONE OF THE WITNESSES IS A LANDMATE MECHANIC. BRING HIM OVER AND DON'T LET ANYONE TOUCH THAT EXO-SKELETON!
KIT
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING..
DON'T FORGET THE RED CROSS IS WATCHING...
TING
SHAK
NOT KNIFE-- SWORD! YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF THE EXO, OKAY?
FLINCH
DRUGS? OR THE KNIFE?

WHAT'D YOU GET?
IT COULD BE A DEFECTOR FROM THE REPUBLIC, YOU KNOW...
YOU HEAR THAT, 21? CHECK ALL THE VIPS IN THE MUNMA ENCLAVE.
HE'S GOT FIVE PARTNERS. SAYS HE'S ON A MISSION TO TAKE A VIP BACK TO THE REPUBLIC.
THE PRISONER S A SOLDIER FROM THE MUNMA HOLY REPUBLIC.* MALE. AGE 16. NO SIGN OF DRUG USE.
POLICE
E.S.W.A.T.
109 CALLING 445. DO YOU READ?
109 OUT.

*A nation intent on converting the world to the Munma religion. The MHR and Israel are two daggers in the side of the Arab League. An oil-producer, the MHR's soaring inflation has antagonized OPEC, but the citizens' lives are fairly good.

IF YOU ASK ME, I THIN--
I'VE LEFT OUR LITTLE CATCH TO 72 AND 65.
HE WAS LONGING TO JOIN THE REAL JIHAD. IT SEEMS HIS ONLY JOB WAS TO DELIVER FOOD TO A DROP BOX.
WHY DIDN'T THEY USE THE KID TO SMUGGLE THOSE PARTS?
WHU --?
KLIK
YOU'RE NOT REQUIRED TO THINK.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, SUDO?
HEAD-QUARTERS. GOT IT, 113. OVER.
GAWD WHAT A FACE!
113 HERE, ONE OF THE SIX LOCATIONS WE'RE STAKING OUT IS NEAR YOUR POSITION-- A PLACE SPECIALIZING IN SELLING OFF OBSOLETE LAND-MATES ON THE CHEAP. WE'LL CHECK IT OUT. OVER.
BUT WE'RE NOT ALLOWED INTO PARTS OF THE MUNMA ENCLAVE. IT'S REALLY JUST A WARNING TO THEM...
I'VE TOLD HQ TO ASSIGN ESCORTS TO ALL EIGHTEEN POSSIBLE VIPS.
...

EVEN IF WE GET THEM ON A STOLEN GOODS CHARGE, ALL WE CAN DO IS DEPORT HIM AS PERSONA NON GRATA... PLAY RIGHT INTO THEIR HANDS.
ASSUMING THE PILOT IS A CYBORG "DIPLOMAT" OR ELSE A CYBORG WHO CAN "BECOME" A DIPLOMAT AS NEEDED, THEN THEY'LL TRY TO TAKE IT OUT OF REACH OF AEGIS, CALL IT RESEARCH EQUIPMENT OR SOME-THING...
WHAT ABOUT THE GIANT LAND-MATE?
HE COULD WALK RIGHT OUT OF OLYMPUS WITH THE DAMNED THING ON.
MAYBE THEY'LL JUST USE IT TO TRASH THE SECRET TALKS...
WE DON'T KNOW THEY REALLY WANT TO TAKE IT HOME. IF IT WASN'T FOR DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY, WE COULD TAKE HIM IN UNDER THE ANTI-TERRORISM LAW...
THE CYBORG'S THE KEY IF WE CAN SHOW HE'S A SPY FROM SOME MALEVOLENT THIRD COUNTRY, THEN THE MUNMA EMBASSY CAN'T VERY WELL CLAIM HE'S A DIPLOMAT!
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY-THING *CON-STRUCTIVE* TO SAY?!
WE DON'T KNOW IF THE CYBORG PILOT IS THE "VIP" OR NOT. THEY MAY JUST WAIT AND SEE HOW THINGS TURN OUT, THEN SAY IT'S "REGRETTABLE" OR SOMETHING ..
DON'T KILL YOURSELF. IF WE RUN OUT OF TIME, WE STILL HAVE SOME TRICKS UP OUR SLEEVE.
DAMN DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY... WE COULD SOLVE IT WITH ONE CLEAN SHOT... POW...!
WANT US TO FOLLOW UP ON THAT?

SKREE
FX VRMMM
K·M
GUNS
SHAPE
POLICE
ONLY

SKRRR
*FX: KLIK
KEE
...
WELCOME!
GUNS
SHAPE
WELCOME!
GUNS
SHAPE
KRK

ROGER. GIVE IT A TRY.
DON'T TRIP ANY "ALARMS." HQ OUT
IF YOU DON'T HEAR BACK FROM US IN FIVE MINUTES, TIGHTEN THE DRAGNET.
SOMEONE'S BROKEN INTO BLUE STEEL ALREADY. NO SIGN THEY'RE STILL HOME. WE'RE GOING IN.
HQ, THIS IS 02, OVER
COME IN, 02.
FX: KSSHHH
FX: SKRASSH
KAHH
THE BACK DOOR SMELLS SUSPICIOUS. MAYBE EXPLOSIVES. CAN'T TELL IF IT'S BOOBY-TRAPPED OR NOT.
GOT YOU, BOLT.
FANG, THIS IS BOLT. DO YOU READ?

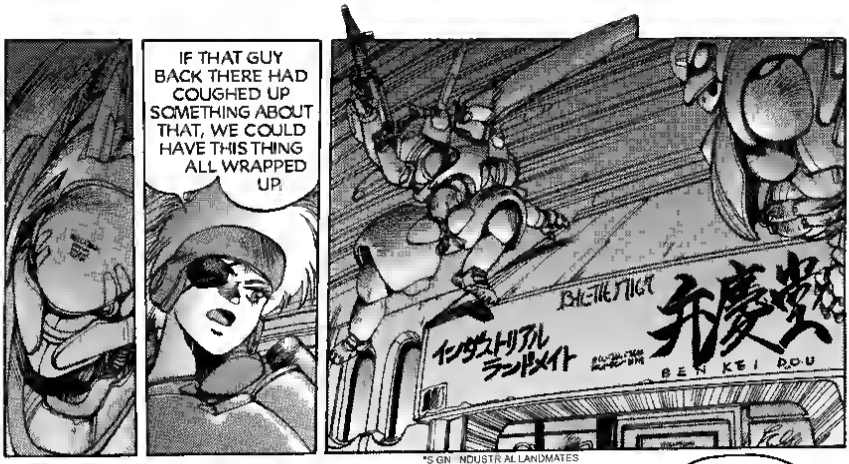
KRAK
*FX THUK
*FX KrEEE
YEAH, I'VE FOUND A LITTLE SOUVENIR, TOO.
SO, THEY'VE CLOSED UP SHOP.
*FX FWA

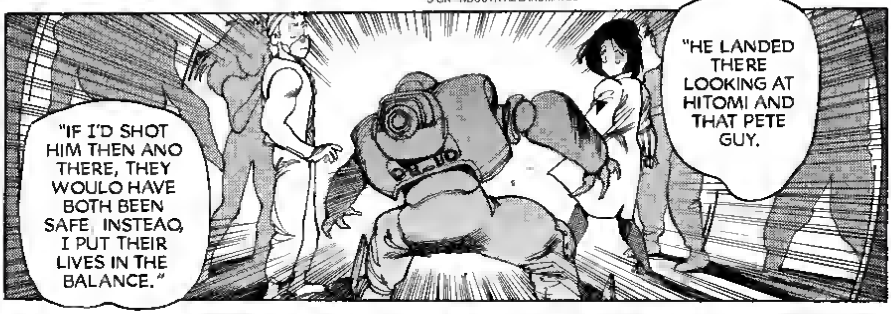
FX: SNAP
FX: KRAK KRAK

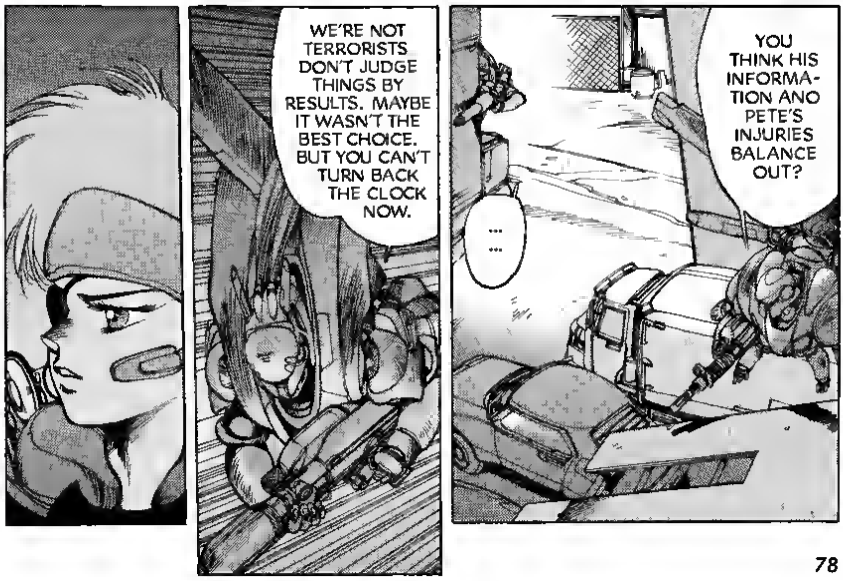
K-CHK
WHA--?
FANG... CLEAR OUT OF HERE. IT'S AN ANTI-PERSONNEL FRAGMENTATION MINE
THEN THAT SOUND...
YEAH.
I JUST ARMED IT.

SENO US AN INOOOR SWEEPER TEAM FROM POLICE HQ.
THE QUARRY TOOK FOUR ANTI-CYBORG RIFLES. WE'VE FOUNO TWO BOOBY-TRAPS USING A/P MINES, ORIGIN UNKNOWN.
HEAO-QUARTERS, THIS IS 02.
ROGER, 02
WAIT.
...
BIP
THE BOMB SQUAD'S OUT ON ASSIGNMENT. WE'LL SEND YOU THE BACKUP FROM INVESTI-GATIONS OVER.
I BELIEVED A9 ONCE, ANO REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENEO?
YOU THINK I'D DO THAT?
LOOK, I'M OKAY. YOU MOVE OUT. WE'VE GOT THREE MORE PLACES TO CASE.
KEEP HIM SUPPORTEO, JUST LIKE THAT. DON'T LET HIM MOVE.
GUGES D... FLIGHT MOOE...

ISRAEL?!
AND ISRAEL'S OWN INFLATION PROBLEM IS GETTING OUT OF HAND.
SENATOR BOYLE, THE IMPERIAL AMERICANA REPRESENTATIVE, HAS BEEN PUSHING TO CUT AID TO ISRAEL.
THEY DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO BREAK UP THE NEGOTIATIONS.
YOU THINK THE ISRAELIS ARE USING THIS GUY TO MANIPULATE THE MUNMA REPUBLIC? BUT WHY SHOULD THEY?
BUT ISRAEL'S GOTTEN ALL THAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM IMPERIAL AMERICANA.
MIDDLE-EAST HEGEMONY? A PRESENT TO THE REPUBLIC?
HEGEMONY STILL IN THIS AGE OF CO EXISTENCE?

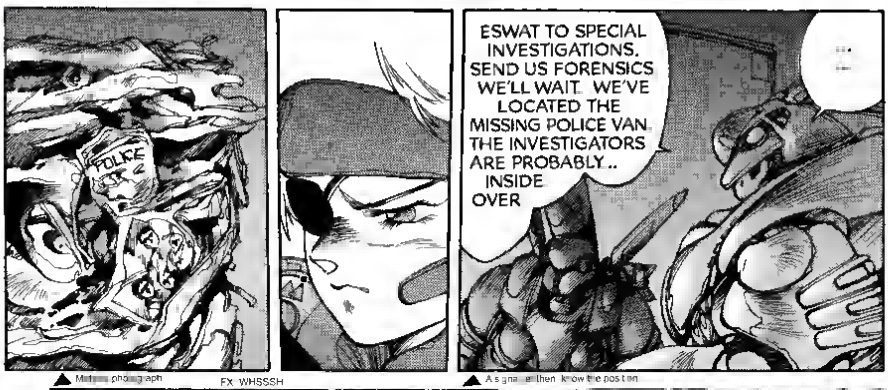

IF THAT GUY BACK THERE HAD COUGHED UP SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, WE COULD HAVE THIS THING ALL WRAPPED UP.
インダストリアル ランドメイト
弁慶堂
BENKEI D.O.U
*SIGN: INDUSTRIAL LANDMATES


"IF I'D SHOT HIM THEN AND THERE, THEY WOULD HAVE BOTH BEEN SAFE. INSTEAD, I PUT THEIR LIVES IN THE BALANCE."
"HE LANDED THERE LOOKING AT HITOMI AND THAT PETE GUY.

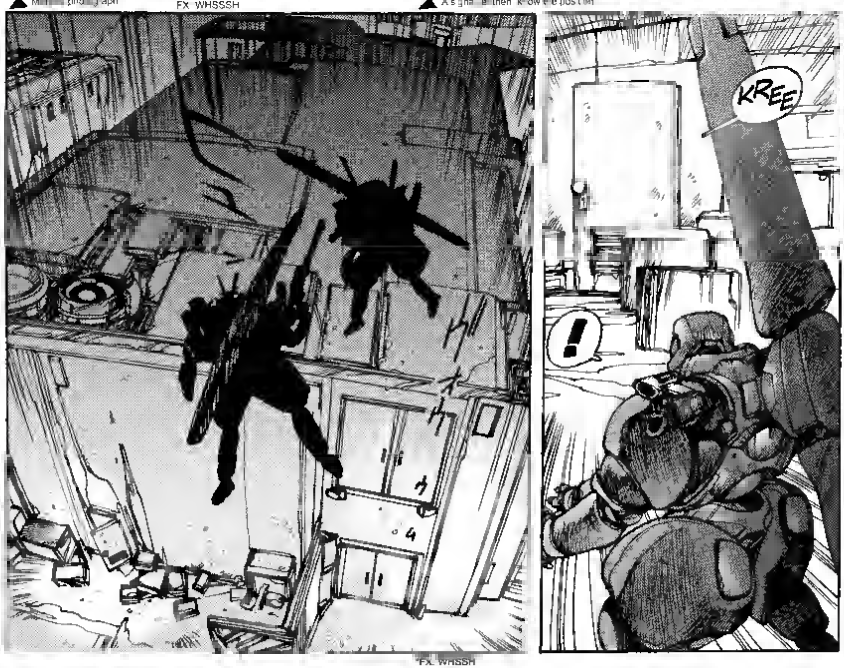

WE'RE NOT TERRORISTS. DON'T JUDGE THINGS BY RESULTS. MAYBE IT WASN'T THE BEST CHOICE. BUT YOU CAN'T TURN BACK THE CLOCK NOW.
YOU THINK HIS INFORMATION AND PETE'S INJURIES BALANCE OUT?
...
...

!
KONO UCHU DEMO ZETTAI NI USHINAUKE TOMONAKU HITOTO NI HITOTO

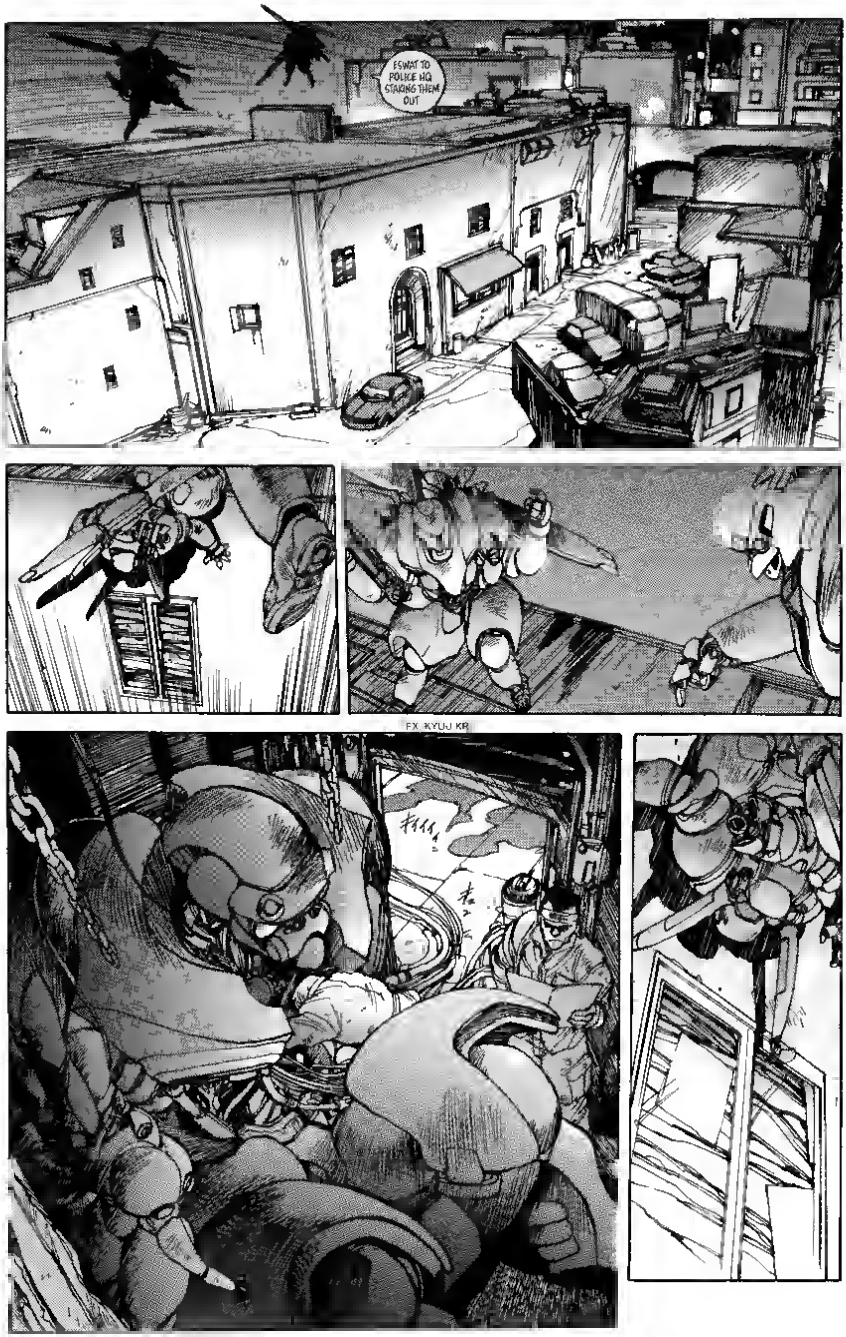
OH! SURE, SORRY...
HUH?
YOU'RE ON DUTY, GIRL.
GUESS SO.
*FX: WSSS
THERE'S NO ONE AROUND. WANT TO GO STRAIGHT IN?
WAIT A MINUTE!


POLICE
ESWAT TO SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS. SEND US FORENSICS WE'LL WAIT. WE'VE LOCATED THE MISSING POLICE VAN. THE INVESTIGATORS ARE PROBABLY.. INSIDE OVER

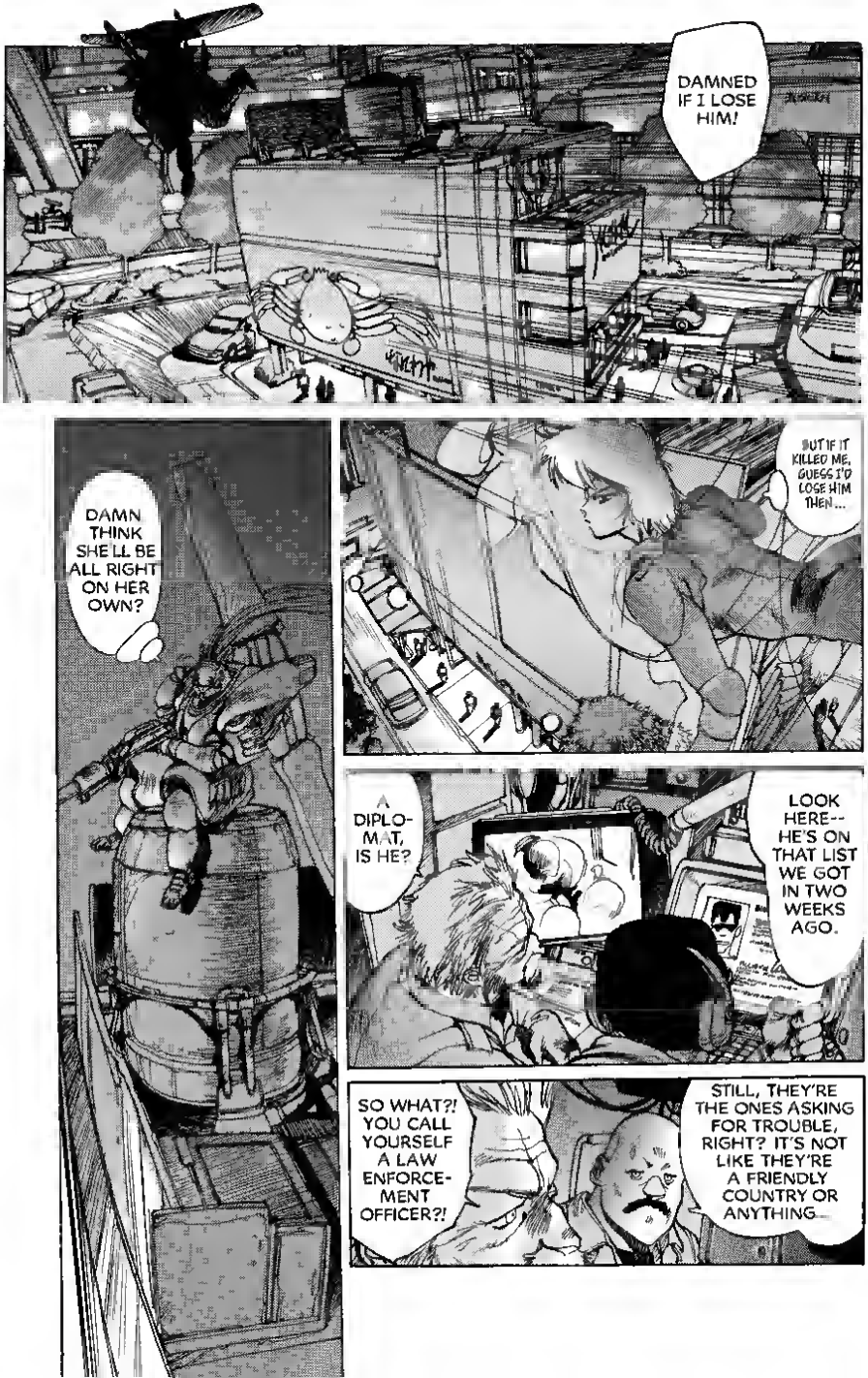
▲ Mid-term photograph FX: WHSSSH ▲ A signal then know the position



FX: GARA GARA GARA GARA
FX: KCHAK
FX: VnNNN
FX: KRANK KONK
NO, IT SOUNDS PLENTY NOISY INSIDE.
JUST THE JANITOR?
THAT QUICK ASCENT MADE ME FIZZY...


FSWAT TO POLICE HQ STAKING THEM OUT
FX: KYUU KR

I CAN SEE JUST FINE... YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOUT. ZOOM IN.
WAIT! SOME-ONE'S COMING
HOLD IT. WE DON'T WANT THE TAIL, WE WANT THE HEAD.
I KNOW THAT GOD I'M NOT THAT DUMB!
109 TO HQ. WE HAVE THE GIANT. AT LEAST FIVE QUARRY. DOWNLOADING VIDEO NOW.
DON'T LOSE HIM, NOT IF IT KILLS YOU!
DEUNAN! FOLLOW THAT GUY!
WHAT'RE YOU LAUGHING ABOUT? TRACE THE OWNER OF THAT RENT-A-CAR! IF HE'S DIFFERENT FROM THE GUY WE ALREADY BROUGHT IN, REPORT BACK PRONTO!
HEH HEH!
OOH, I DON'T WANT ANY MAN EXCEPT MY BRI!
#07
"FX VREEEEE
4
WHAT?
YEAH, YEAH...
IDIOT
ZOOM ON
NOTHING
REF
ZOOM
UNDERSTAND? NONE OF THIS FRAMING BUSINESS WHEN WE'RE IN A HURRY. ALLAN WILL UNDER-STAND.


DAMNED IF I LOSE HIM!
DAMN THINK SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT ON HER OWN?
BUT IF IT KILLED ME, GUESS I'D LOSE HIM THEN...
A DIPLO-MAT, IS HE?
LOOK HERE-- HE'S ON THAT LIST WE GOT IN TWO WEEKS AGO.
SO WHAT?! YOU CALL YOURSELF A LAW ENFORCE-MENT OFFICER?!
STILL, THEY'RE THE ONES ASKING FOR TROUBLE, RIGHT? IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE A FRIENDLY COUNTRY OR ANYTHING...

IT COULD WALK RIGHT OUT OF HERE WHILE WE'RE TALKING.
ACCORDING TO OUR TECHIE HERE, THAT VIDEO CLIP SHOWED FINAL CALIBRATIONS ON THE GIANT.
PUT ME THROUGH TO NIKE. TOP PRIORITY.
WHAT IS IT, 98?
TELL HIM NO.
YO, MAGUS HERE. UH— I MEAN 45. YOU THINK 109 NEEDS BACK-UP?
I'm in position!
HOLD IT, BRIAREOS! NO SHOOTING!
I THOUGHT HE'D SAY THAT.
72, HAVE YOU GOTTEN RID OF THE MOSQUITOES YET?
JUST WAIT!
HOW LONG WILL THAT BE?
SUDO— 21, LINK UP WITH 113. DON'T STOP THEM, DON'T EVEN INTERFERE WITH THEM, UNTIL I GIVE THE ORDER.
THE CYBORG IN THE LOWER LEFT CORNER IS THE CULTURAL ATTACHE AT THE MUNMA HOLY REPUBLIC EMBASSY. HE WAS ON A SUSPECT LIST WE GOT IN TWO WEEKS AGO. I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE OTHERS, BUT DON'T HURT THAT GUY. NOT ONE SCRATCH!
THE OLD MAN'S TRYING TO PLAY A GENTLE MAN'S GAME WITH A CHIMPANZEE.

YES. IT'S ABOUT THAT ONE.
SORRY TO DISTURB YOU SO LATE IN THE EVENING, MA'AM.
*FX. BEEP BEEP BEEP
CHAK
DON'T LET THEM SET THE PACE.
I KNOW THAT... BUT THE BAD GUYS WANT TO PLAY ROUGH, TOO.
THERE'S NO SOLUTION BETTER THAN A QUIET SOLUTION.
I WANTED TO GO RIGHT IN THERE AND BUST THAT GIANT'S ASS.
*FX. SHUUUU
LANCE IS TOO HIDEBOUND. A HIGH BATTING AVERAGE, BUT NO HOME RUNS...
IT WAS PREDICT-ABLE THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
GKRIK GKRIK GKRIK
BUT NOT IF WE GOT A REPRIMAND FOR IT.
...OF COURSE, WE COULD JUST HAVE HIM DIE IN AN "ACCI-DENT"...
YOU KNOW... RELAX, RELAX

DON'T BOTHER THINKING ABOUT IT JUST CUT THE ONE ON THE FAR RIGHT
THE CONNECTION PLATE IS SEALED
IT'S ONE OF THE OLD YK7 TYPES. TRIGGERED BY VIBRATIONS. IT MUST BE ONE OF THESE SIX WIRES, BUT WHICH ONE...?
ODDS ARE FIVE TO ONE AGAINST
SKRIK SKRIK SKRIK
TFX SNIK
WELL, IF WE'RE WRONG IT'LL ONLY LAST A SECOND...
WHEEW!
JUST TWO TO GO, NOW

I WOULD HAVE INTERPRETED A9'S GESTURE THE SAME AS YOU: "I'M OKAY, CONTINUE THE MISSION." RIGHT?
BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE SAYING BEFORE.
SOMEONE'S COMING.
YEAH...
UMM... BUT YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN WRONG, LIKE ME..
*FX: SKREEK SKREEK SKREEK
SHH!
BUT US DYING FOR HUMANS ISN'T NATURE, IT'S *DUTY*. AND IF IT'S DUTY, THEN THE COMPENSATION THEY GAVE A9'S FAMILY WAS *WAY* TOO--
AND THE GODDESS OF NATURE SAYS "NEVER FORGET DEATH."
IT'S RIGHT THERE IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY-- "DEATH IS THE GREATEST GIFT."
ASS-HOLE.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT BASTARD SAID? "I GET OFF LIGHTLY, YOU KEEP ON SUFFERING."

HEY, GRAMPA!! IT'S SOKAK BABY! YOU GOT MY "GUTS"* READY?!
PULL THE PIN... ping! KABOOM! PUSH THE BUTTON... ching! KABOOM!
IIT'M THE CHAMPION OF SKAPRAPOHN... HIC...
AW, NUTS.
*FX KRSHH
*FX WHDD WHDD WHDD WHDD
THIS STORE IS UNDER OFFICIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION, SO CLEAR OUT!
STOP PLAYIN' WITH GRAMPA'S GUNS, OKAY?
HEY, I MUSTA SCARED THE SHIT OUTTA YOU, HUH?
CUSTOMER?
DON'T SHAKE IT!!
THIS LITTLE THINGY BY THE DOOR BELONG T'YOU?

*A shaped-charge explosive

*E O D --Explosives Ordinance Disposal

LET HIM TRY. EVERY MINUTE COUNTS.
TWIT.
SHOULOA TRIED THAT LINE BEFORE I TRIPPEO OVER *THIS,* KNUCKLE-HEAO.
NO WAY, FANG! LEAVE THE CIVVIES OUT OF IT.
...
FX: EH HEH HEH
JUST *JOKIN',* GUYS.. JOKE! C'MON, OON'T LOOK SO PISSEO OFF-- I'LL DO IT. JUST GIMME YOUR CREOIT CARO.
えっへっへ
...
ALL RIGHT, I'M ASKING YOU. TRY IT.
FORGET IT!!
THERE-- I JUST TRANS-FERRED A THOUSAND BUCKS TO MY AC-COUNT.
...YOU CAN OO JUST ABOUT *ANY-THING.*
BEEP
MAN, YOU *CRAZY?!* WITH ONE 'A THESE...
I THOUGHT THEY WERE ONLY GOOD FOR JIMMYING LOCKS.
MY... MY VACA-TION..!
CHEATER!
AW, C'MON-- CHEAP AT THE PRICE! STOP *MOANIN'!*

*FX: SHING
THIS IS A TIME-HONORED TECHNIQUE.
NOW THEN... LECTURE TIME!
*FX: KANG
YA!
ANOTHER REASON--TO LET THE CRIMINAL KNOW HOW CLOSE THE INVESTIGATORS HAVE GOTTEN.
TO KILL ANY COP WHO TRIES TO HELP THE OWNER.
SO, BOYS--WHAT IS THIS MINE FOR? YOU TELL ME.
*FX: TAK TAK TOK TAK
THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOMB--
THE OLD "ALARM BELL," EH? NO, THAT WAS THE ONE AT THE DOOR. SORRY, LADS--YOU BOTH FLUNK.
*FX: KONK
*FX: CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP
HI!
HI, GUYS! IT'S THE BOMB BROTHERS!
!
WORKED TOO!
--IS TO BUY TIME.*
*GARA GARA

*If investigators are sloppy, the mine at the front door will take care of everything. If they're too smart for that, the second mine will delay them.

CENTER STATION
HQ, 109 HERE, OVER.
KLIK
ROGER, 109. OVER.
KLIK
CHECK OUT THE CAR AND QUARRY. THE CONVERSATION SOUNDS LIKE HEBREW TO ME. TRANSLATE IT AND GET BACK TO ME.
*FX HYUUUU

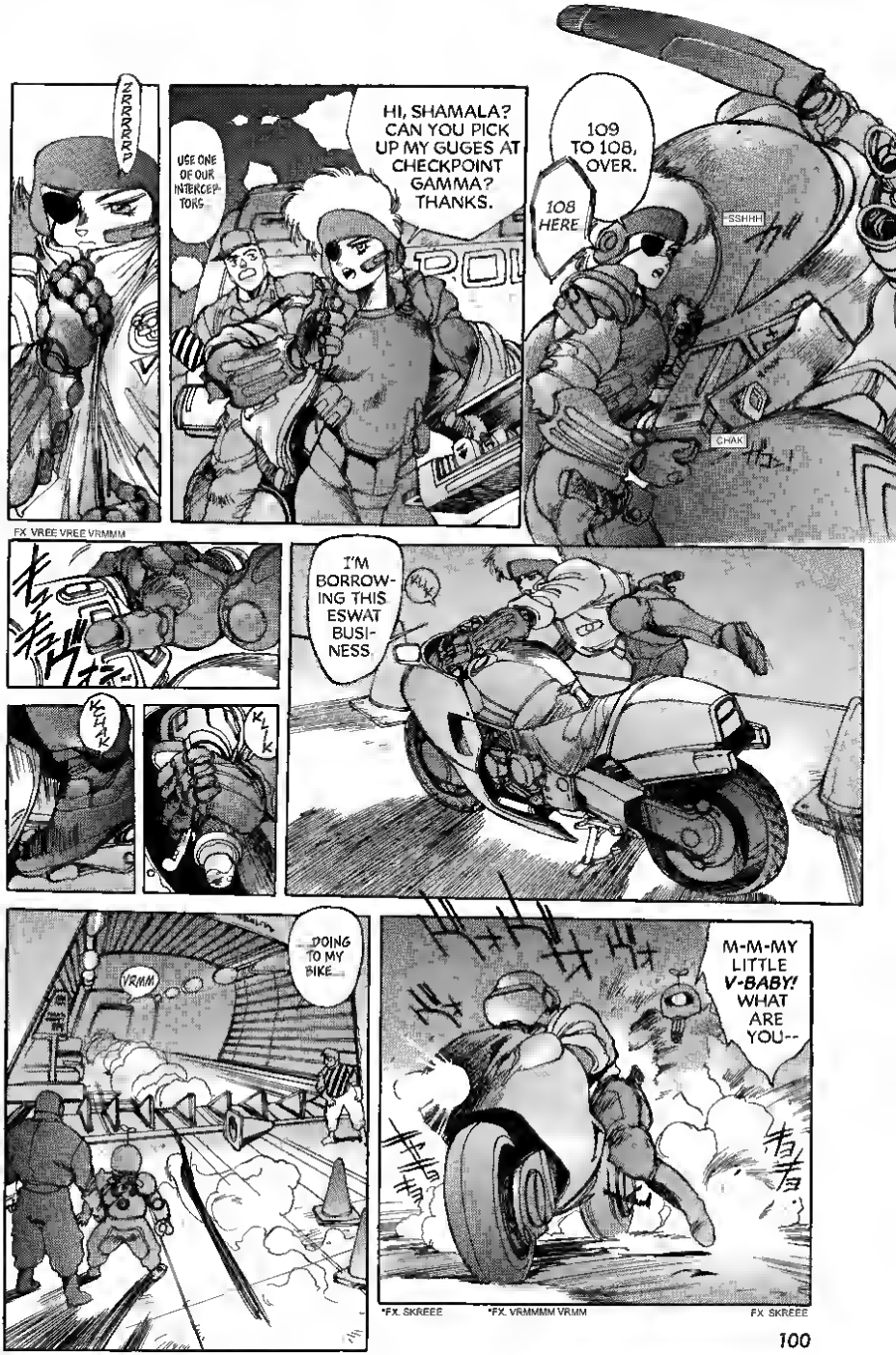
*FX CHAK CHAK
IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT SCREW UP BECAUSE OF YOUR EYE, YOU CALL FOR BACKUP, OKAY?
READ YOU, 45.
109, THIS IS 45.
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO SWITCH TO A TRAIN OR A BUS OR SOMETHING. THAT'S THE THEORY, ANYWAY..
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT, DUMMY! I MEANT THIS CASE ISN'T WORTH GETTING KILLED OVER! 45 OUT!
LOOK, 45, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WANTS THIS BASTARD, SO IF YOU..
*FX FWSS
READ YOU, HQ ORDERS?
HQ TO 109 OVER.

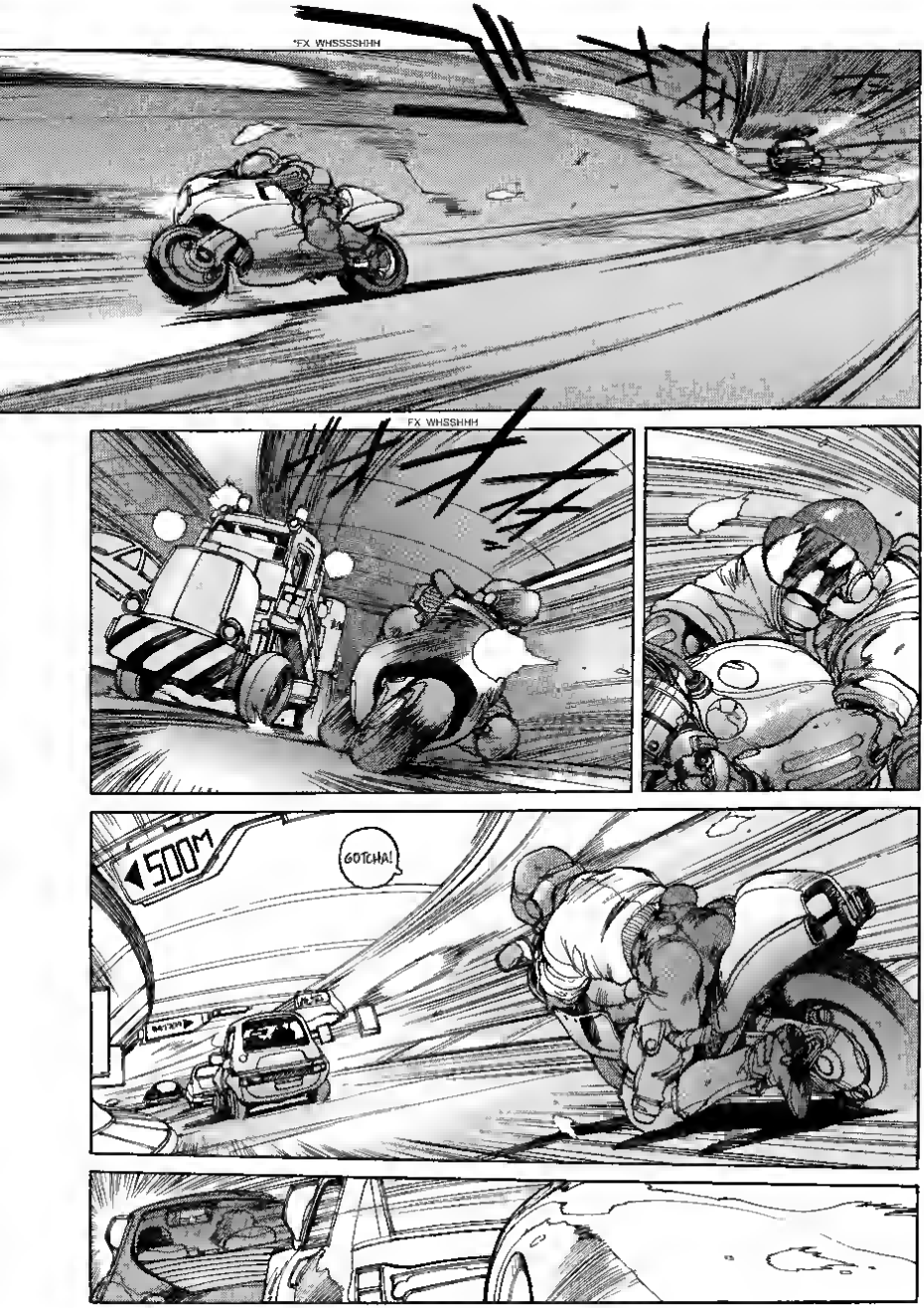
FX VMMMMMM
NOT YET, 109. I HEAR THERE WAS NO LAWYER PRESENT AT YOUR LAST INTERROGATION.
THE FOLKS OVER AT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE, AH, SOMEWHAT BOTHERED BY THE CROTCH-TO-STERNUM KNIFE WOUND YOU LEFT ON HIM.
"VOLUNTARY," HMMM?
CHIEF OF STAFF NIKE WAS HIMSELF AT THE INVESTIGATION.
I JUDGED THAT HASTE TOOK PRECEDENCE IN THIS INVESTIGATION.
IT WAS A VOLUNTARY CONFESSION, SIR
I GAVE HIM PSEUDO-ADRENALINE TO HEIGHTEN FEAR REACTION. THAT WOUND WAS NECESSARY TO TRIGGER IT, SIR.
OOPS... IGNORED THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS AGAIN.
WELL, NIKE'S LANDING HERE NOW. HQ OUT.
ROGER, HQ.
500M
HM?

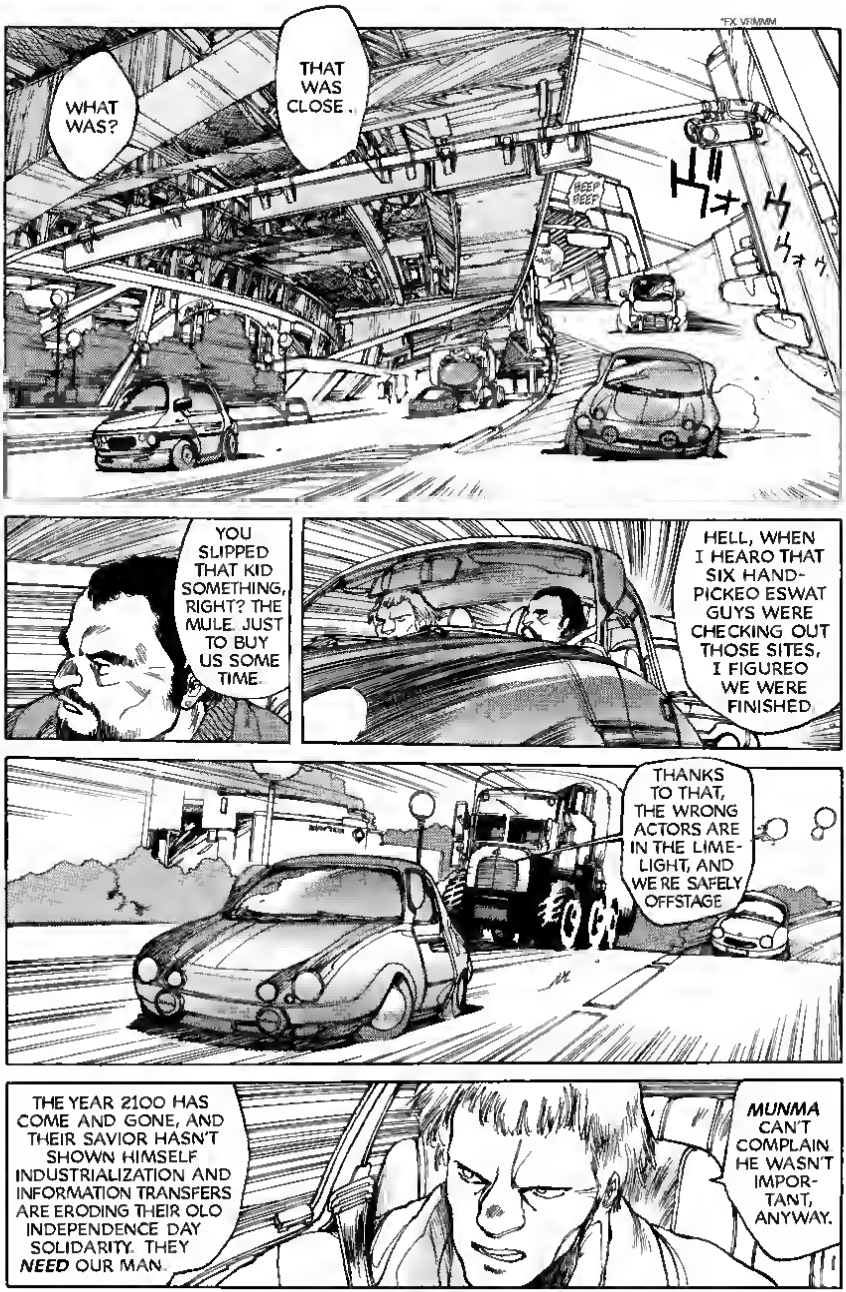
OAMN... A TUNNEL.
IT'S A ROAD-BLOCK!
OF COURSE. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT, RIGHT AT THE BASE OF THE BEZEKRIC ARCOLOGY? DON'T WORRY.
FX VREEE
VMMM
TAK!
TAK
TAK
TAK

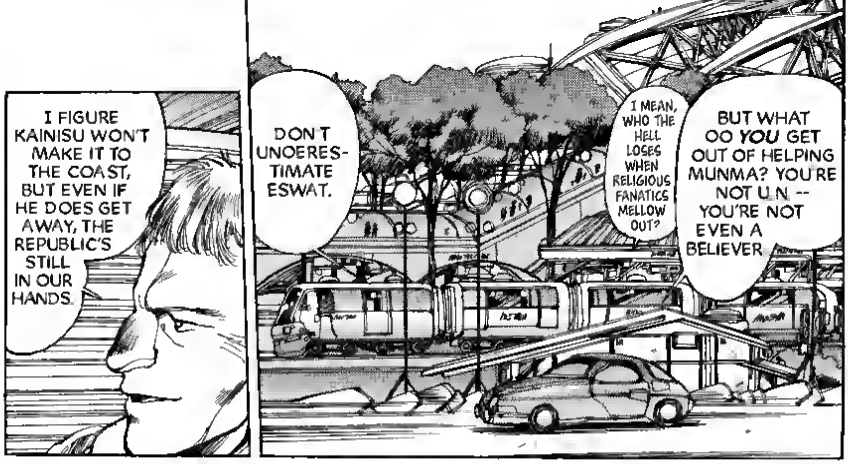
*FX VNNNN
WE HOLD ALL THE CARDS, DON'T WORRY.
AND HOW DOES IT AFFECT OUR HAND?
*FX VSHHH
BUT YOU MUST ADMIT IT WAS EFFECTIVE, MA'AM.
YOU CAN HARDLY EXPECT ME TO PRAISE THAT KIND OF WORK, COMMANDER.
FX VRAAAA
WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
*FX VRMMM
FOOL!
SHUDDUP!
YOU'RE A MORE SUSPICIOUS LOOKING GUY THAN ME!
FWEET

FX: WHSSS
FX: KSSHH
OOH! EXO-ARMOR! I WANT IT!
KOTUS? PRIORITY OVERRIDE ASSIGNMENT! GUARD MY GUGES!
FX: SSHHSSH
AND DON'T SCREW IT UP, LIKE LAST TIME!
NO ONE BUT ME LAYS A HAND ON IT! NO PICTURES, EITHER!
IT'S P4 CLASSIFIED-- THE GUN, TOO.
KSSH!


ZRRRRRR!
USE ONE OF OUR INTERCEPTORS...
HI, SHAMALA? CAN YOU PICK UP MY GUGES AT CHECKPOINT GAMMA? THANKS.
109 TO 108, OVER.
108 HERE.
-SSHHH-
CHAK
FX. VREE VREE VRMMM
I'M BORROWING THIS ESWAT BUSINESS.
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
DOING TO MY BIKE...
VRMM
M-M-MY LITTLE V-BABY! WHAT ARE YOU--
*FX. SKREEE
*FX. VRMMMM VRMM
FX. SKREEE


*FX WHSSSSHHH
FX WHSSHHH
500M
GOTCHA!


WHAT WAS?
THAT WAS CLOSE.
FX: VRMMM
BEEP! BEEP!
YOU SLIPPED THAT KID SOMETHING, RIGHT? THE MULE. JUST TO BUY US SOME TIME.
HELL, WHEN I HEARD THAT SIX HAND-PICKED ESWAT GUYS WERE CHECKING OUT THOSE SITES, I FIGURED WE WERE FINISHED.
THANKS TO THAT, THE WRONG ACTORS ARE IN THE LIME-LIGHT, AND WE'RE SAFELY OFFSTAGE.
THE YEAR 2100 HAS COME AND GONE, AND THEIR SAVIOR HASN'T SHOWN HIMSELF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND INFORMATION TRANSFERS ARE ERODING THEIR OLD INDEPENDENCE DAY SOLIDARITY. THEY *NEED* OUR MAN.
MUNMA CAN'T COMPLAIN HE WASN'T IMPORTANT, ANYWAY.


I FIGURE KAINISU WON'T MAKE IT TO THE COAST, BUT EVEN IF HE DOES GET AWAY, THE REPUBLIC'S STILL IN OUR HANDS.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ESWAT.
I MEAN, WHO THE HELL LOSES WHEN RELIGIOUS FANATICS MELLOW OUT?
BUT WHAT DO *YOU* GET OUT OF HELPING MUNMA? YOU'RE NOT U.N. -- YOU'RE NOT EVEN A BELIEVER.

LOOK, I DON'T CARE IF GOD WAS UNFAIR ABOUT WHERE HE BURIED HIS TREASURE AND IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS IF HE STUCK PEOPLE IN COUNTRIES HE KNEW WERE GOING TO GET HIT BY DROUGHT AND FAMINE.
NAW. THEY'LL JUST BUY UNDER THE COUNTER
POSEIDON MIGHT STOP BUYING FROM THEM TO PROTECT ITS CORPORATE IMAGE BUT WHO ELSE?
SO YOU ISOLATE THEM DIPLOMATICALLY. THE OIL ROUTE'S NOT GOING TO CHANGE... MOST OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES STILL DEPEND ON OIL.

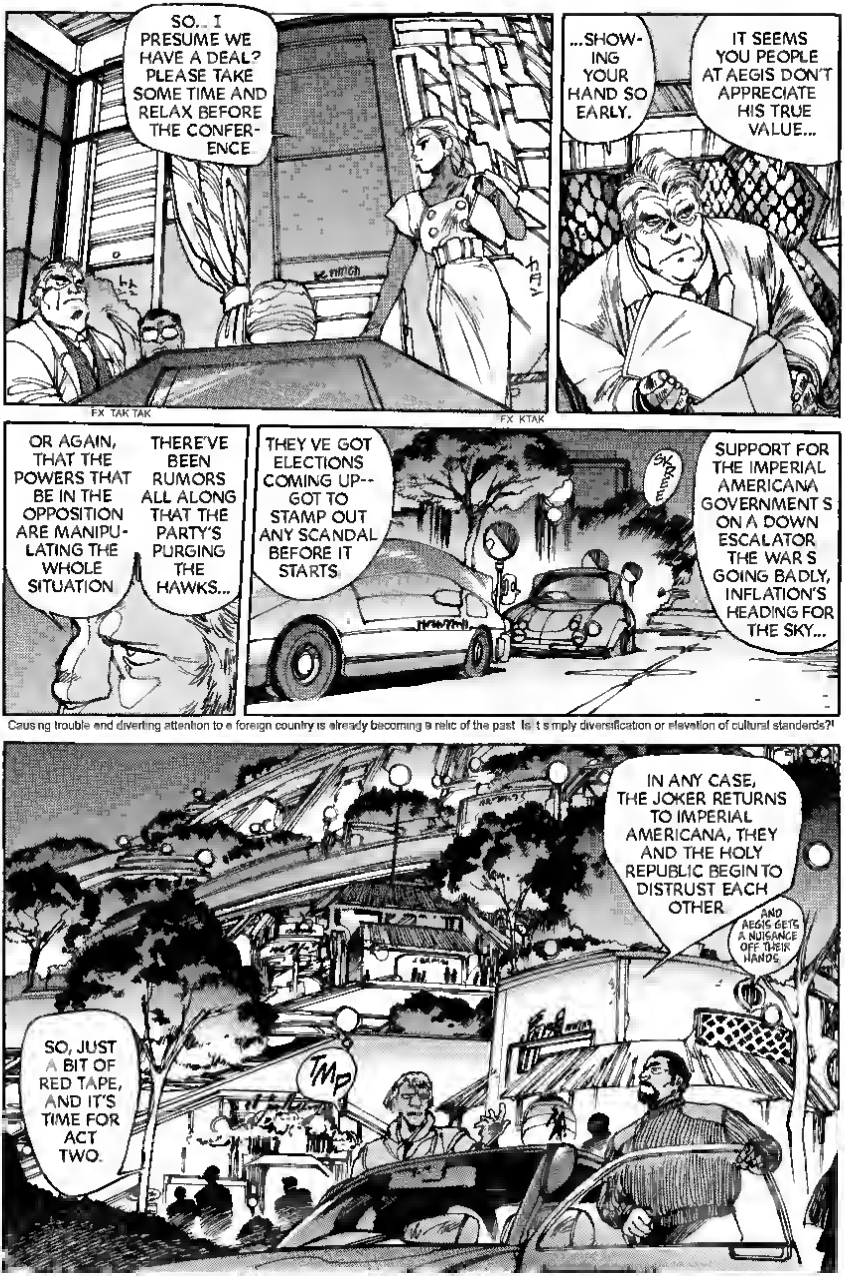
YOU'LL LIVE A LONG TIME FELLA
THE WAY I WORK, SEE, IS THIS--IF YOU'RE NOT SURE SOMETHING'S OUT THERE, JUST ASSUME IT IS AND BE *DAMNED* CAREFUL.
SO YOU'RE THE LIBERAL PRAGMATIST, PATCHING UP GOD'S WORK FOR HIM.

EITHER WAY, SOME *AEGIS* BIGWIG SHOULD BE MEETING WITH THE GUESTS RIGHT NOW TO GET THEM TO YANK HIS DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY.
BY NOW KAINISU IS SURROUNDED. MAYBE HE'S ALREADY UNDER ATTACK.
"GUESTS"...? WHO?

...
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK, SENATOR BOYLE?
THAT'S THE GAME AEGIS PLAYS BEST. NICE, QUIET REVOLUTION BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED, EH?
THEY'LL LAY OUT PROOF THAT HE'S BEING STALKED BY A MUNMA HOLY REPUBLIC 'DIPLOMAT."

IT'S A CIRCUS, PAL. ONE MORNING IT'S THERE, NEXT MORNING IT'S VANISHED LIKE A DREAM.
WORLD PLANNING BY COMPUTERS AND BIOROIDS...
QUITE A RISK.
NAW. IT JUST BUGS ME. A BUNCH OF SIMPLISTIC IDEALISTS PLAYING HOUSE TOGETHER COULDN'T HAVE PUT TOGETHER A CITY LIKE THIS.
SO, THE OLD "WHO STARTED THE WAR" GAME?
IT'S NOT LIKE THE MAYANS OR THE AZTECS...
OLYMPUS APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE, IN AN AGE WHEN INFORMATION AND CORPORATIONS COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL BORDERS
YEAH, BUT IMPERIAL AMERICANA WOULDN'T MOVE AGAINST OLYMPUS JUST BECAUSE OF MYSTERIES...
THE WHOLE WORLD HAD THE WOOL PULLED OVER ITS EYES... BUT THAT BY ITSELF SHOULDN'T HAVE LED TO WAR. TOO MANY MYSTERIES...
Tritogenia AVE.
200m
OUT CROSSING AVE.
CREEK ST
WHERE'D THEY GET ALL THE CAPITAL FROM, ALL THE MATERIALS, EH?
THE SLEEPING DRAGON MAY FINALLY BE AWAKE. BUT IT STILL HASN'T BEGUN TO FLEX ITS MUSCLES.
AND I WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT'S REALLY FOR. WHEN AND HOW THEY GOT ALL THE PEOPLE TOGETHER, HOW THEY KEPT IT A SECRET...

SENATOR, I MUST POINT OUT THAT YOUR VISIT TO OUR BUREAU IS STRICTLY UNOFFICIAL. ITS PURPOSE NEEDN'T BE PURELY POLITICAL.
WE'RE ALSO AWARE THAT CERTAIN ARMED ELEMENTS IN MUNMA OPPOSE OUR "PARTICIPATION." HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION. JUST KEEP ON BUYING INEXPENSIVE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN--
GRANTED, OUR IMPERIAL AMERICANA *DOES* PROVIDE THE BULK OF THE PEACE-KEEPING FORCES IN THE HOLY REPUBLIC. BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT WE CONTINUE SENDING SUPPLIES TO THE REPUBLIC'S REFUGEES. PURELY HUMANITARIAN, OF COURSE.
IF YOUR COUNTRY WEIGHED YOUR LIFE AGAINST THE IMPERIAL AMERICANA VOICE IN HOLY REPUBLIC AFFAIRS, I WONDER WHICH WOULD BE THE HEAVIER...
IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT SOMEONE IN YOUR COUNTRY MAY BE USING YOU, MR. SENATOR, IN SOME "TRANSACTION" TO WIN OVER THE ANTIGOVERNMENT FORCES.
HMM?
...THAT'S WHEN THEY PLAY THE *JOKER* IN THE DECK.
THEY'D COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF RATIONALE, BELIEVE ME.
BUT LIKE YOU SAY, PAL--THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MOVE THE AMERICANS. AND SO...


SO... I PRESUME WE HAVE A DEAL? PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME AND RELAX BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.
FX TAK TAK
...SHOWING YOUR HAND SO EARLY.
IT SEEMS YOU PEOPLE AT AEGIS DON'T APPRECIATE HIS TRUE VALUE...
FX KTAK
OR AGAIN, THAT THE POWERS THAT BE IN THE OPPOSITION ARE MANIPULATING THE WHOLE SITUATION.
THERE'VE BEEN RUMORS ALL ALONG THAT THE PARTY'S PURGING THE HAWKS...
THEY'VE GOT ELECTIONS COMING UP-- GOT TO STAMP OUT ANY SCANDAL BEFORE IT STARTS.
SUPPORT FOR THE IMPERIAL AMERICANA GOVERNMENT S ON A DOWN ESCALATOR THE WAR S GOING BADLY, INFLATION'S HEADING FOR THE SKY...
Causing trouble and diverting attention to a foreign country is already becoming a relic of the past. Is it simply diversification or elevation of cultural standards?!
IN ANY CASE, THE JOKER RETURNS TO IMPERIAL AMERICANA, THEY AND THE HOLY REPUBLIC BEGIN TO DISTRUST EACH OTHER.
AND AEGIS GETS A NUISANCE OFF THEIR HANDS.
SO, JUST A BIT OF RED TAPE, AND IT'S TIME FOR ACT TWO.
TMP

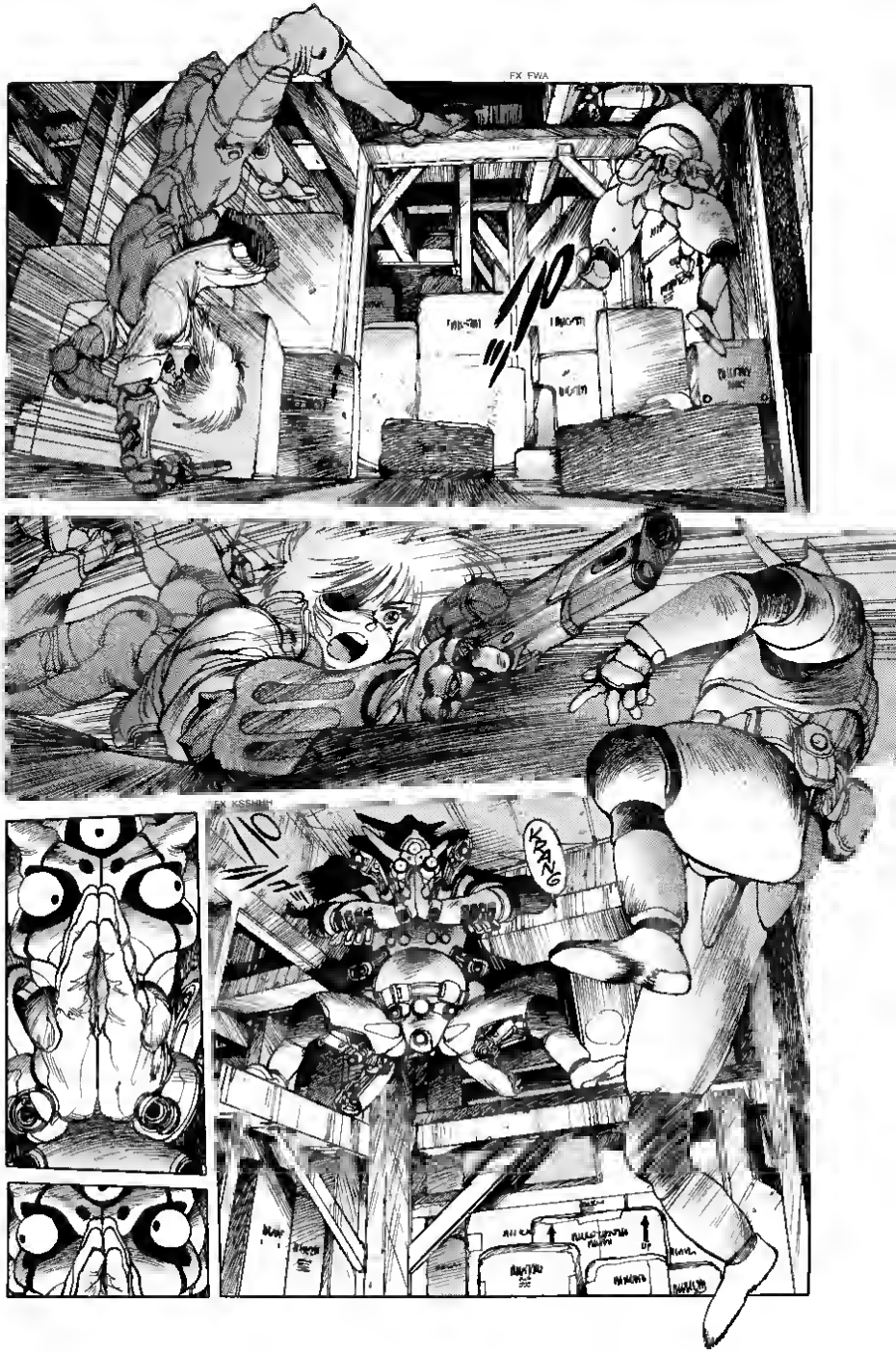
Insha'Allah...

YEAH...
HARD DAY, GENTS?
GOOD EVENING, MA'AM.

WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
THOSE TWO GUYS WHO JUST CAME IN... DO THEY WORK HERE?
ROSE-HIP TEA
WHAT'LL IT BE?
*FX KREEK
*FX TINK
I'M SCOUTING FOR COVER MODELS...
I'M AN EDITOR FOR *PIRATE*...YOU KNOW, THE COMBAT MAG?
SMILE
OH, SORRY, SORRY.
*FX HAHAHA
REALLY? THEY OON'T LOOK IT
ANYWAY, I DON'T THINK THOSE GUYS WILL GO FOR IT. THEY'RE COPS, YOU KNOW
YEAH, A WALKING AD! MY BOSS IS FULL OF THESE REALLY DUMB IOEAS...
THAT WHY YOU'RE WEARING THAT SILLY GETUP?
はは
HERE IN BEZEKRIC, WE LIKE TO COOPERATE WITH THE COPS...
GEE! WOW! GOSH!
YEAH, TACTICAL INVESTIGATIONS OR SOMETHING. YOU KNOW THOSE *ESWAT* JOCKS? THEY'VE RENTED THE WAREHOUSE OUT BACK.

*FX TWITCH
ヒク
OOPS...
*FX HAHAHAHA... EH
あはははははっは
THANKS... COME BACK AGAIN SOME-TIME.
WELL, SO MUCH FOR THAT. GUESS I'LL GIVE UP AND TRY SOMEWHERE ELSE...
*FX EHEHEH
YAHOO! THANK YOU THANK YOU!
WELL, CAN'T BE HELPED, I GUESS. YOU CAN PAY THE NEXT TIME YOU COME
DISH WASHER'S ROBOTIC...
I-I'M SO SORRY! SNIFF!
I FORGOT MY CARD!
NO PUSH
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH A CASH-LESS SOCIETY...

HUH?


FX FWA
FX KSSHHH
KARN
UP

FX TIK TIK TIK TIK
SOKAKU HERE? THE TRAFFIC OUTSIDE MUST BE SCREWING UP HIS AUDIO SENSORS...
CHAK
?
?
WHY DOESN'T SHE WARN THEM?
SHAK
WHY DOESN'T HE WARN THEM?
!
HEY! ARE YOU AFTER THEM, TOO?!

FWA
*POW
*PHUTT
FX: WHCHAK
YOU'RE *ESWAT*, RIGHT?! I WANT TO DEAL! GET THESE OFF ME!
OH, SHIT...! I *HATE* THOSE!

YOU LISTENING? HEY !
I WAS PLANNING TO NAB THE TERRORISTS AND SELL THEM OFF TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. BUT YOU CAN HAVE THEM... JUST A HUNDRED THOUSAND BILLS. CHEAP, EH? DEAL?
NO, WAIT A MINUTE--WHEN SPECIAL FORCES HIRE MERCS, THEY NEVER FILL THEM IN ON THE BACKGROUND. HE WOULDN T KNOW ANY-THING EVEN IF I CAUGHT HIM.
MUNMA HAS LOTS OF ENEMIES. THE ARAB COMMAND, UNITED ISLAM... HE COULD EVEN BE WORKING FOR IMPERIAL AMERICANA SPECIAL OPS... HMMM
WOULD IT HAVE BEEN SMARTER TO COOPER-ATE...?
FX GUI

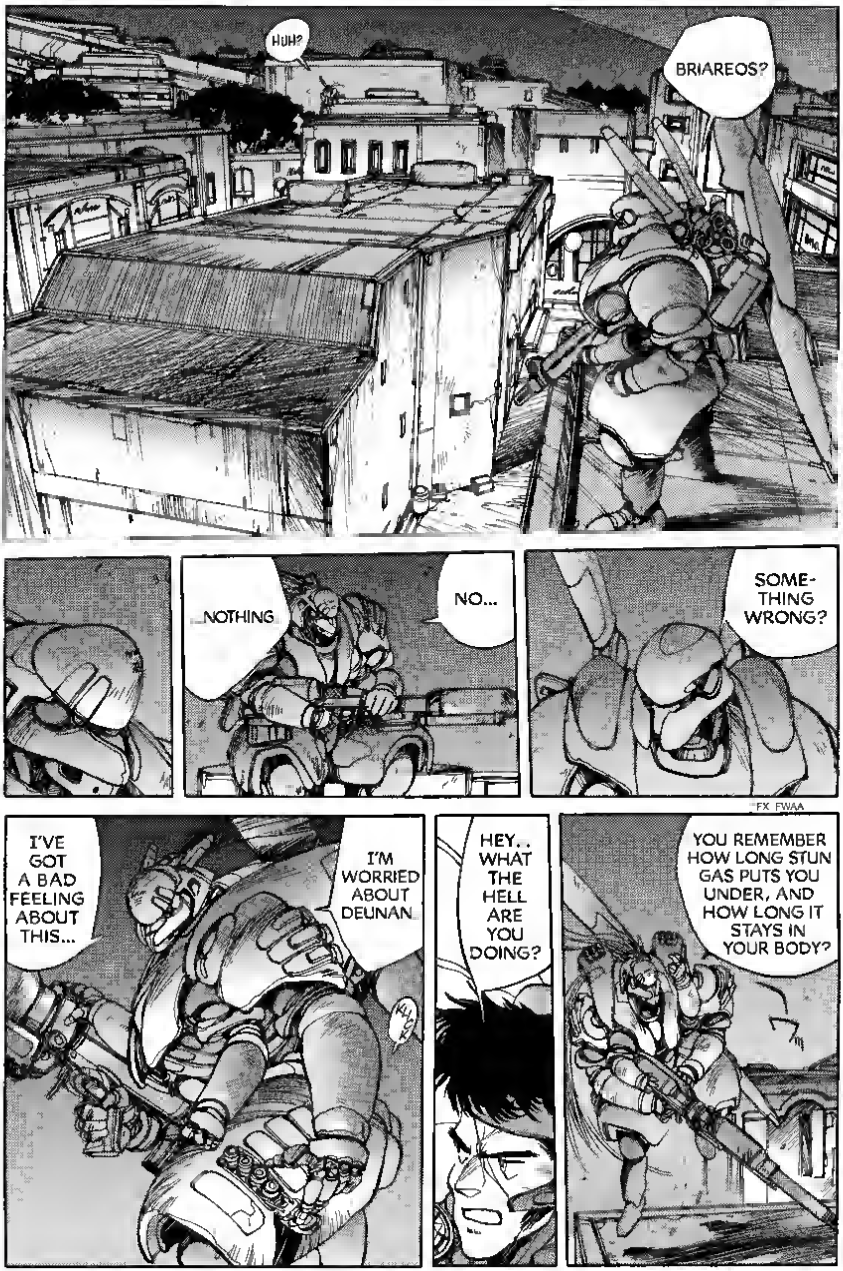
--THAT'S ALL I GOT TO SAY.
SHUT UP! GET IT RIGHT, THEN GET IT RIGHT AGAIN!
ALL RIGHT, ONE MORE TIME-- LET'S GO OVER THE SCHEMATICS FOR THE BLOCK WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING BOYLE.
JUST REMEMBER-- TIMING IS EVERYTHING. IF YOU MISS THE WINDOW, DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES JUST PULL OUT.
AGAIN?! COME ON...!

ONCE THEY SCATTER, THERE'LL BE NO WAY TO TRACK THOSE FAKE POLICE LMS...
WAIT A SEC... IF I PULL BACK FAR ENOUGH SO THEY CAN'T MONITOR MY TRANSMISSION, THEY COULD LEAVE WHILE I WAS CALLING...
IF I CHARGE IN BY MYSELF, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN GET ALL OF THEM. WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TRACE THE SECURITY LEAK, EITHER...
EVEN IF I SET OFF SOME FIREWORKS HERE, LANCE'LL STILL FIGURE THE GIANT'S THE MAIN SHOW AND THE FIREWORKS ARE A DECOY...
LOOKS DAMN REAL, FOR A MODEL GUN
I TELL YOU, YOU WANT GOOD WEAPONS, YOU BUY ISRAELI
I'D BETTER CALL THIS IN...
THE GIANT'S JUST A DECOY?! IT'S BOYLE THEY'RE AFTER?
SO THIS IS IT. THE MOMENT IN WHICH BATTLES ARE LOST OR WON...
THEY'RE VALUABLE MERCENARIES, TEFFEN-TRAINED. I DON'T WANT TO THROW THEM AWAY.
IF ANYONE LAGS BEHIND, WASTE THEM WITH *ESWAT* WEAPONRY.
HAVE THEM BEHAVE LIKE *ESWAT* IN EVERY-THING EXCEPT THE ASSASSINA-TION.
WE BORROW REAL GUNS ALONG THE WAY, HUH?
I SUPPOSE I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU, BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE GIANT.

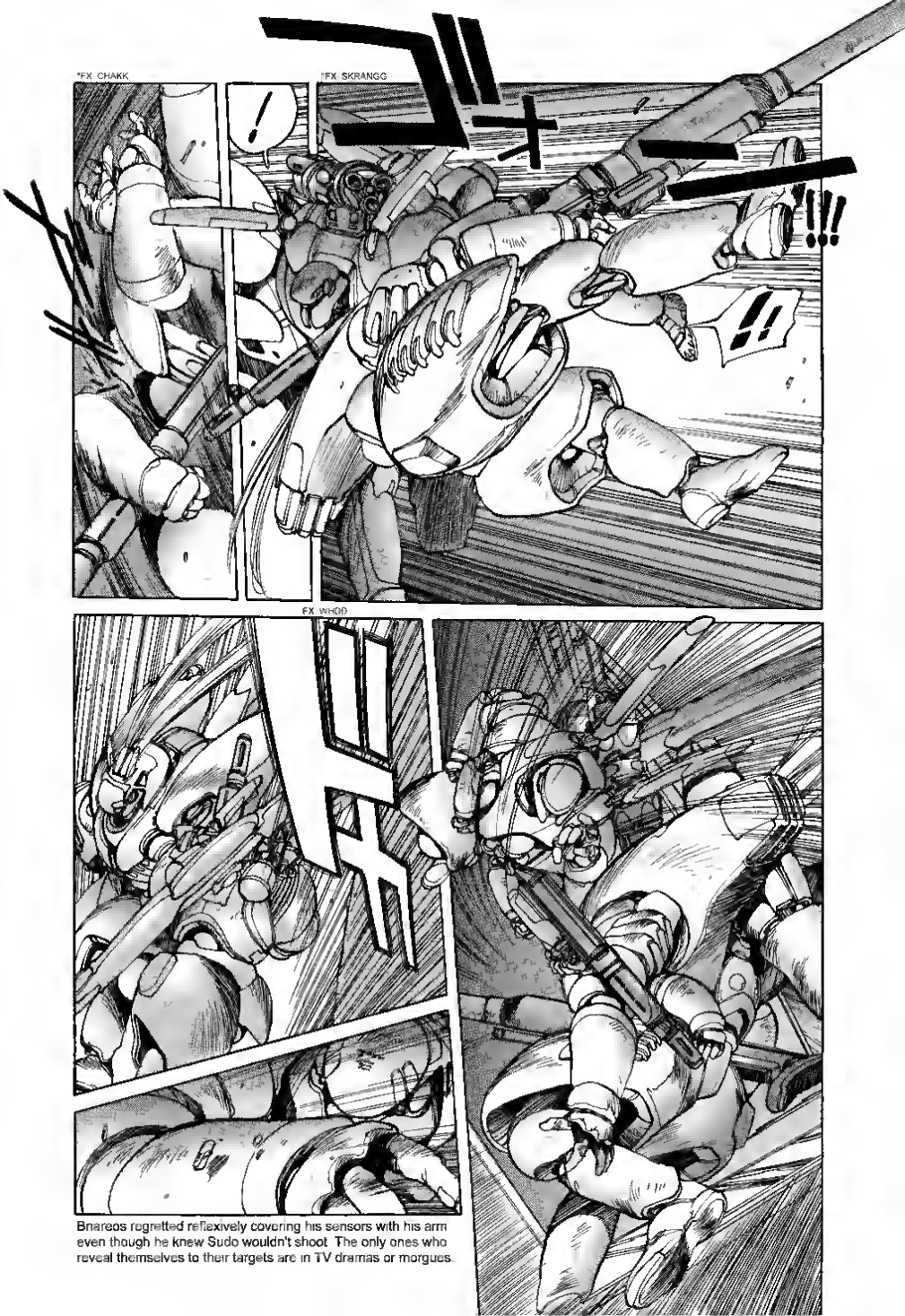
TAKE ALL THE PLANS YOU'VE USED AND BURN THEM DOWN TO ASHES. THEN FLUSH THE ASHES DOWN THE TOILET.
*FX FWOOSH
ONLY DON'T FORGET--YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS. DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE THEM.
SURE, OF COURSE YOU DON'T. IT'S UP TO YOU, THEN.
FX FWSS
FX VNNN
*KSSSH

FX SSHH
WHAT'S THE MUNMA GIANT DOING?
ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. PRAYER TIME SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
OAMNED RIGHT IT IS. FIRST THEIR WATER PIPES BREAK, THEN THEY LOSE THEIR POWER... MUST BE ANNOYING, EH?
WE'VE GOT FIVE FLINT COCK-ROACHES IN THERE, TOO. AND ON TOP OF THAT, WE RE FEEDING A LIGHT CONCENTRATION OF SLEEPING GAS IN THROUGH THE VENTILATION SYSTEM.
I THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING THE FINAL CHECKS. IT'S TAKING THEM LONG ENOUGH.
HEH!
THE TECHIES ARE REALLY GOING AT IT.
THEY BETTER PRAY.
GOING OVERBOARD, IF YOU ASK ME. WHAT IF THEY SPOT-- WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT?
SPECIAL POLYMER GEL ROUNDS.
BLIND HIS EYES, PLUG UP HIS IN-TAKES?
BUT IS HE REALLY WORTH CAPTURING INTACT? THE GIANT'S SO STRONG WE'VE HAD TO CONCEN-TRATE OUR FORCES HERE.
THE BAD GUYS HAVE THEIR MOLE SOME-WHERE. THEY KNOW ALL ABOUT IT. WE'RE DOING JUST WHAT THEY WANT US TO.
NOT THAT WE HAVE ANY CHOICE ABOUT IT

SOKAKU!
WHY DIDN T YOU SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE?
YOU SAID YOU PLANNED TO CAPTURE THEM, YOU SKUNK. OKAY-- IF YOU WANT ME TO HELP YOU, TELL ME YOUR PLAN.
YOU CAN KNOCK OVER THE UNMANNED LAND-MATES, MAYBE BURY A FEW OF THEM. BUT THE CYBORGS CAN GET OUT.
I'VE LAID THEM OUT SO THE SECOND, THIRD, AND FOURTH FLOORS WILL COME DOWN ON TOP OF EACH OTHER, TRAPPING THE MERCS ON THE FIRST.
NO, WHY?
YOU DIDN'T MOVE ANY OF THOSE WOODEN CRATES, DID YOU?
IT'S A DEAL, YES? NOW GET THESE DAMNED THINGS OFF ME!
AND THAT S WHERE YOUR NASTY LITTLE GUNS COME IN SO HANDY.

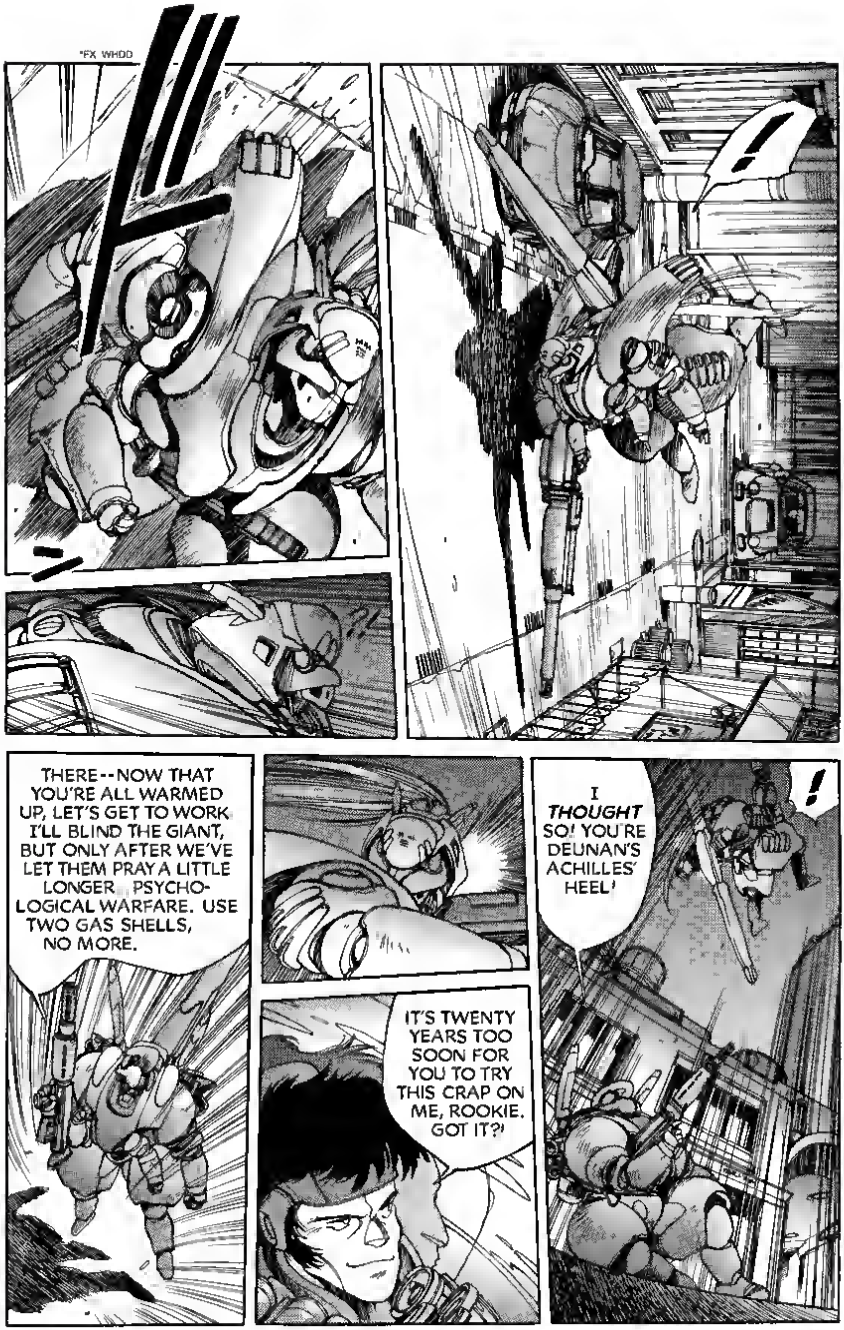

HUH?
BRIAREOS?
NOTHING.
NO...
SOME-THING WRONG?
FX FWAA
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...
I'M WORRIED ABOUT DEUNAN.
HEY.. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
YOU REMEMBER HOW LONG STUN GAS PUTS YOU UNDER, AND HOW LONG IT STAYS IN YOUR BODY?

*FX CHAK
*FX KSSHH
STOP TALKING LIKE A PROPHET... ALL THAT MUNMA PRAYING GETTING TO YOU?
MAY BE
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO ROPE ME INTO THIS, GIVE IT UP. AND IF YOU'RE SERIOUS, COUNT ME OUT!
LANCE, THAT OLD FOX. HE DEMOTED ME TO A DAMNED BABYSITTER, DIDN'T HE?
SORRY, SUDO, BUT THE BRASS CAN GO TAKE A FLYING LEAP ON THIS ONE.
THE TARGET S GOING TO WALK SOMETIME. ANY-WAY, I'LL PUT THE LITTLE GUYS UNDER IT WON'T AFFECT THE TWO CYBORGS OR THE GIANT
CHK
WH-CLUNK
*FX FLING
*FX WHSST

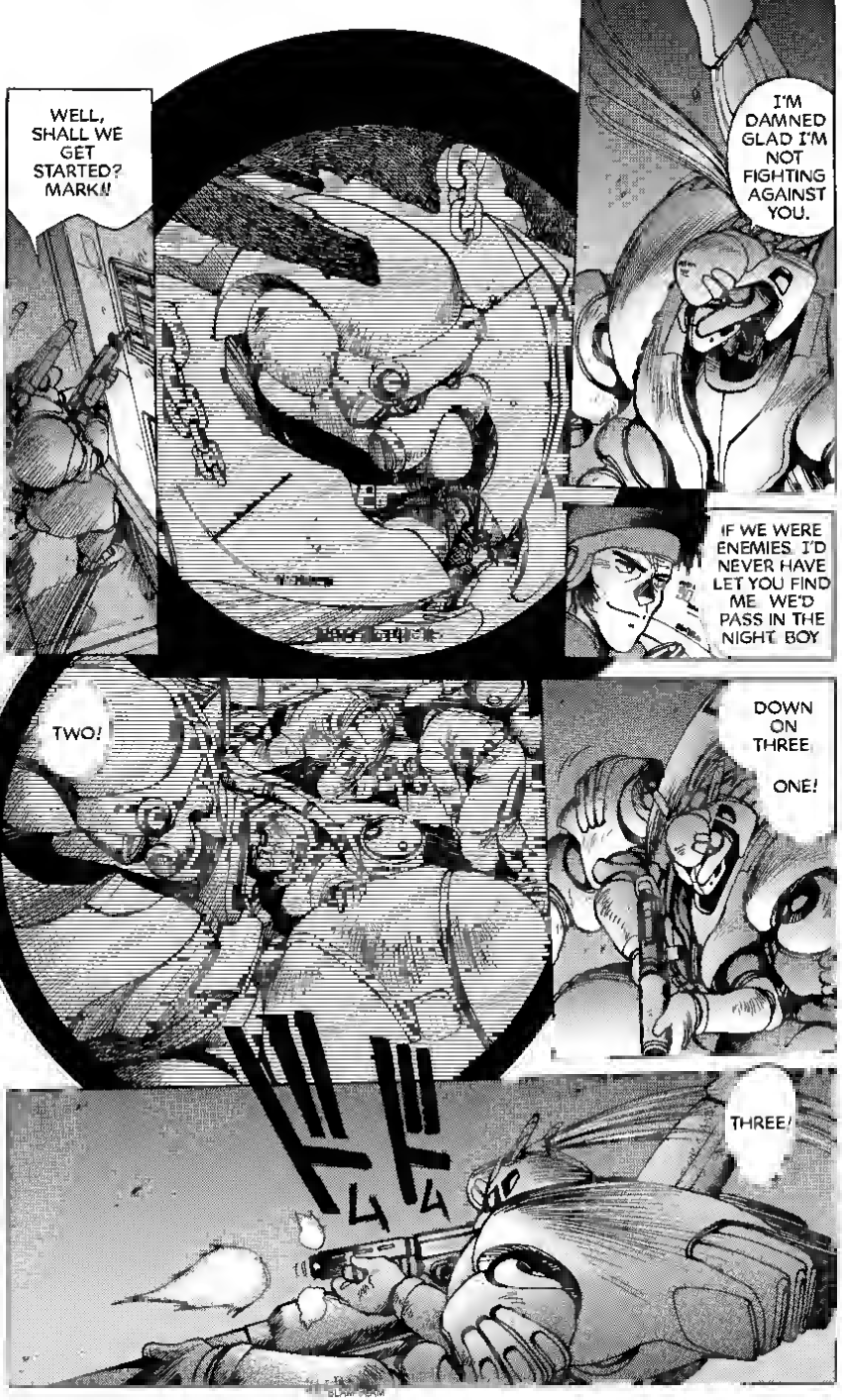


Bnareos regretted reflexively covering his sensors with his arm even though he knew Sudo wouldn't shoot. The only ones who reveal themselves to their targets are in TV dramas or morgues.

FX KRANGG
FX WHSST
!
FX POI

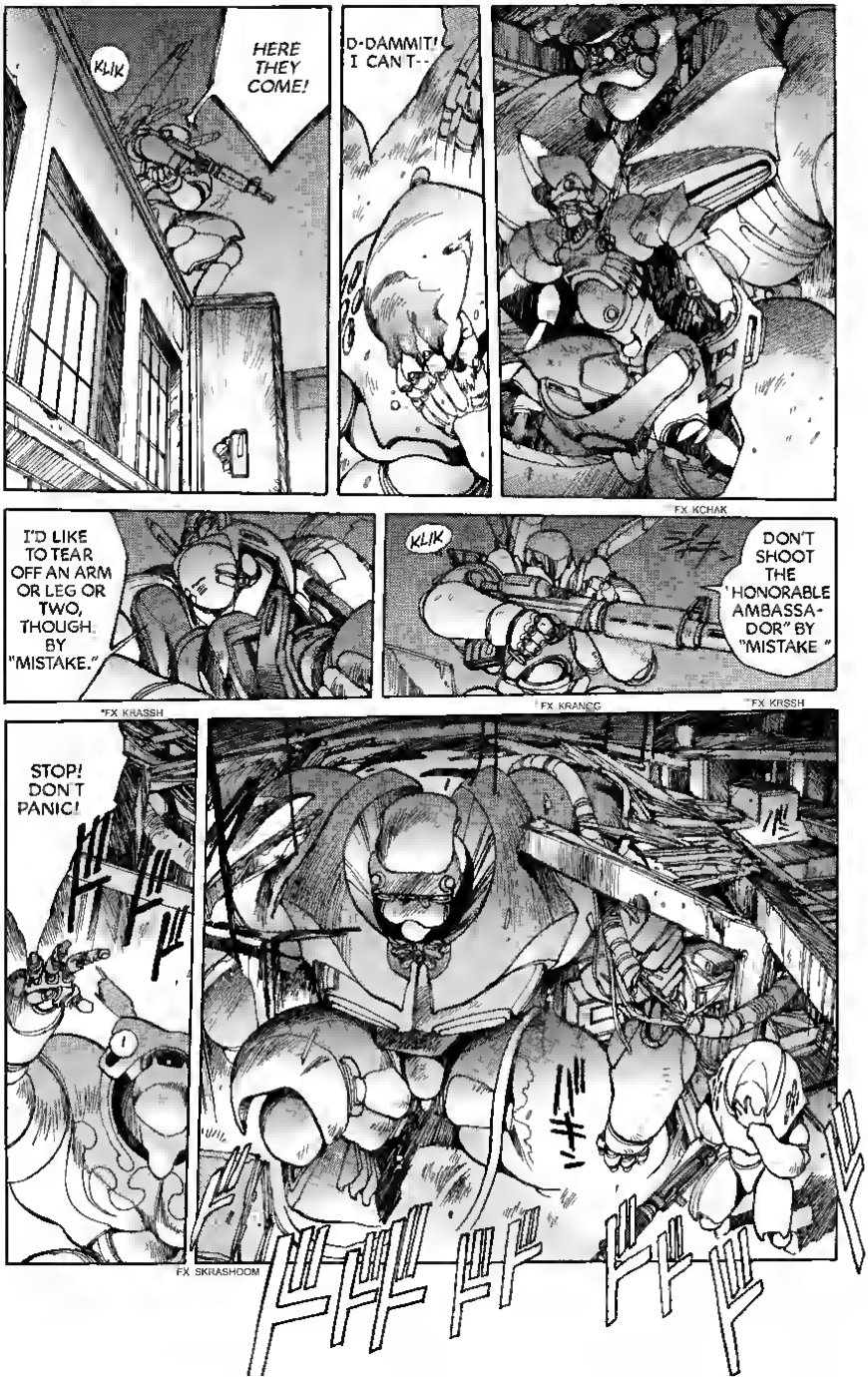

*FX WHOO
!
THERE--NOW THAT YOU'RE ALL WARMED UP, LET'S GET TO WORK. I'LL BLIND THE GIANT, BUT ONLY AFTER WE'VE LET THEM PRAY A LITTLE LONGER... PSYCHO-LOGICAL WARFARE. USE TWO GAS SHELLS, NO MORE.
IT'S TWENTY YEARS TOO SOON FOR YOU TO TRY THIS CRAP ON ME, ROOKIE. GOT IT?!
I *THOUGHT* SO! YOU'RE DEUNAN'S ACHILLES' HEEL!
!

NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT SHE IS TO YOU.
IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS WHEN YOU CAN LEAST AFFORD TO BE IMPATIENT.
SUDO, I...
WAIT THIRTY SECONDS. WE MAY GET PERMISSION TO FIRE
FX: KSSHH
AND TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'M JUST A WEE BIT BORED MYSELF.
FORGET IT.. YOU RE STILL YOUNG. JUST AS LONG AS YOU LEARN FROM IT.
WHILE YOU'RE STILL ALIVE...
I'M SORRY..
THE GUY WHO FEELS THE FLOW IS THE GUY WHO TASTES VICTORY
EVERY BATTLE HAS ITS OWN FLOW.

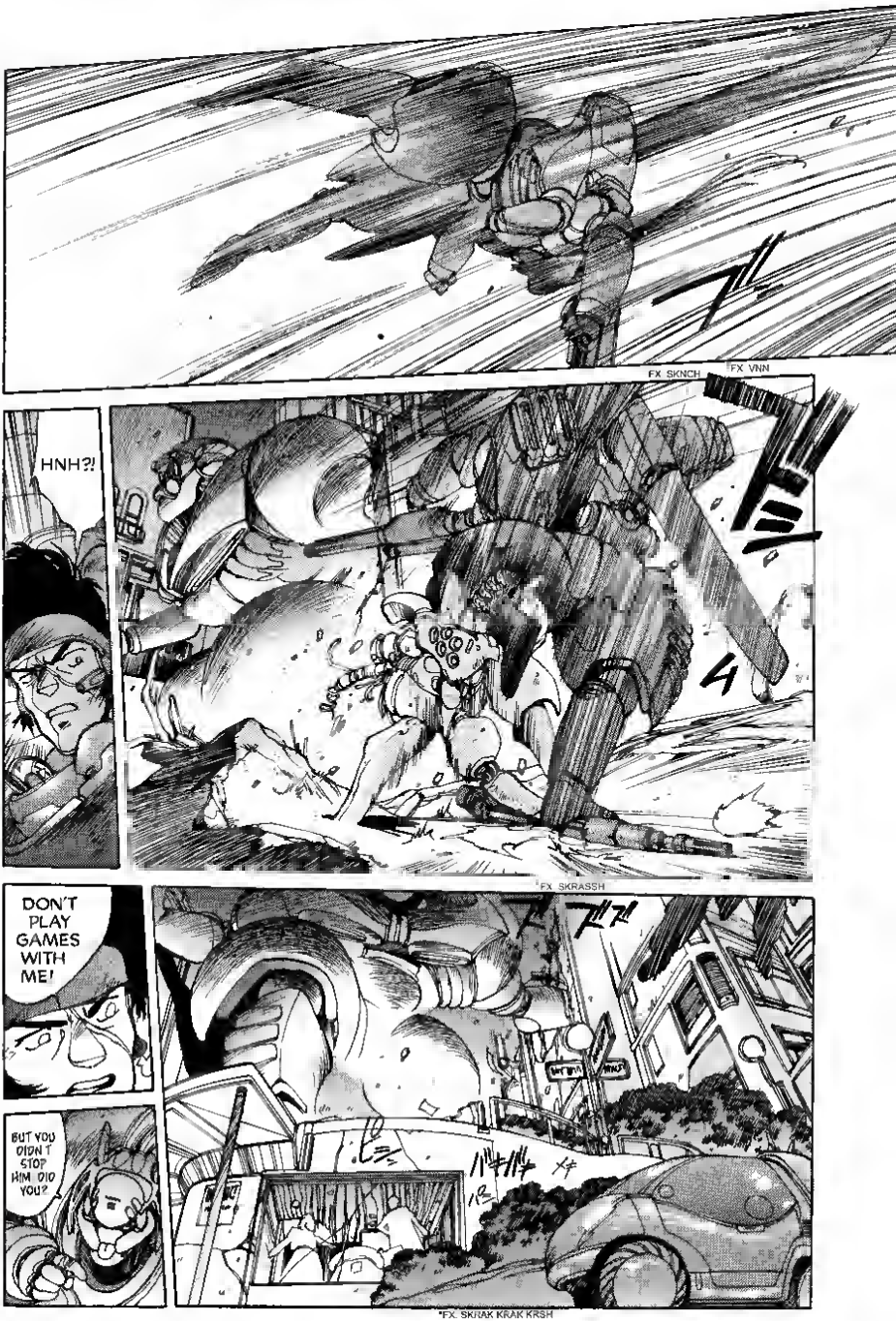

WELL, SHALL WE GET STARTED? MARK!!
I'M DAMNED GLAD I'M NOT FIGHTING AGAINST YOU.
IF WE WERE ENEMIES, I'D NEVER HAVE LET YOU FIND ME. WE'D PASS IN THE NIGHT, BOY.
TWO!
DOWN ON THREE. ONE!
THREE!
BLAM BLAM

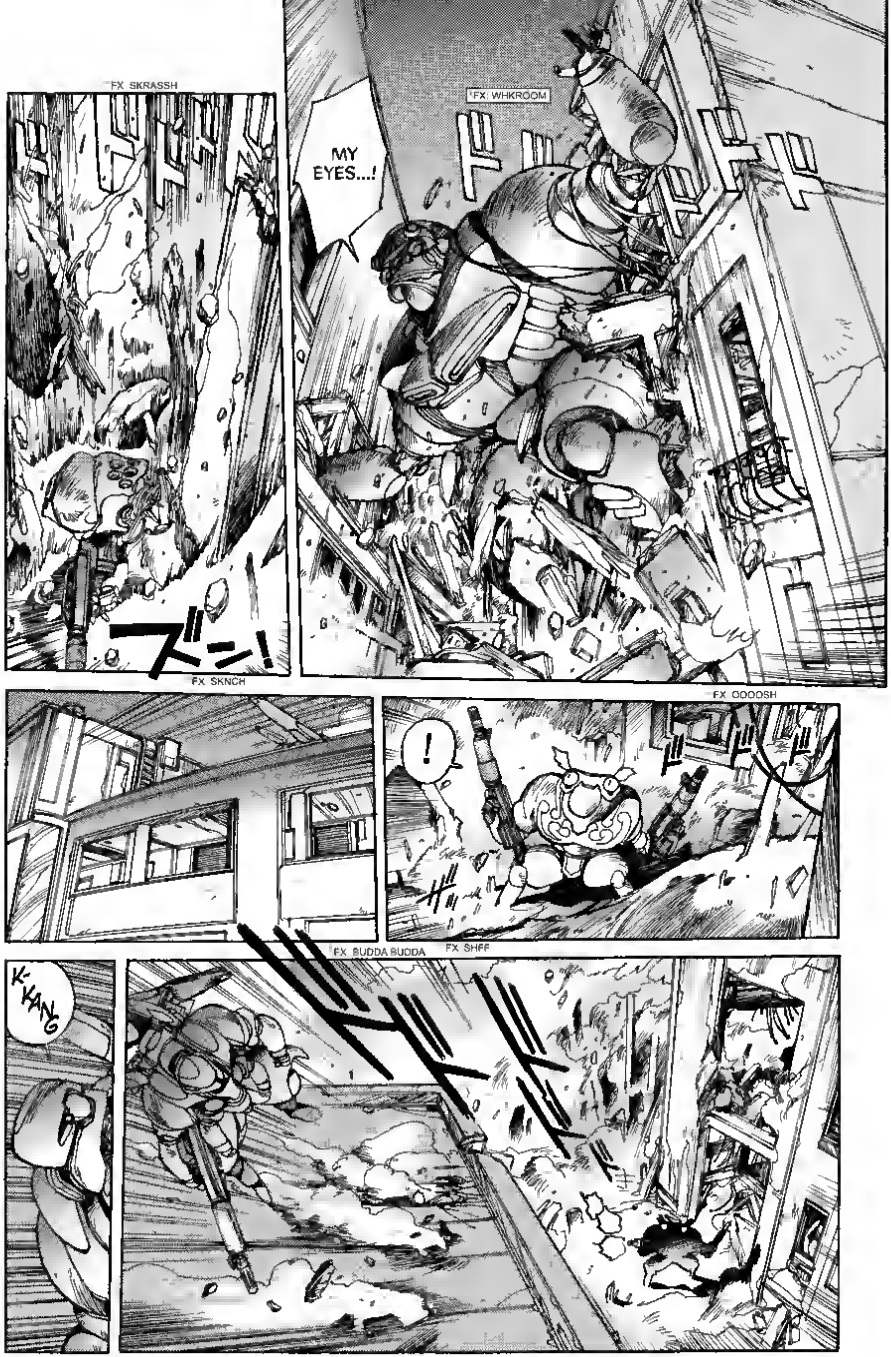
*FX FSHH
WHA--? WHAT THE--?
*FX POF POF
HUH?!
HELP KAINISU! GET TO THE GIANT!
HRK!
*FX FWDD
DOCTOR SLADE!
WHAT IS IT?! THE IMPERIAL-ISTS?!
TEKBIR
*FX SHFF

I'M OVER HERE!
KAINISU, SIR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHAT WERE THOSE EXPLO-SIONS?
FX SPLAKK
HNGG!
FX SPLAK SPLAK
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK, YOU FOOL!!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS STUFF?

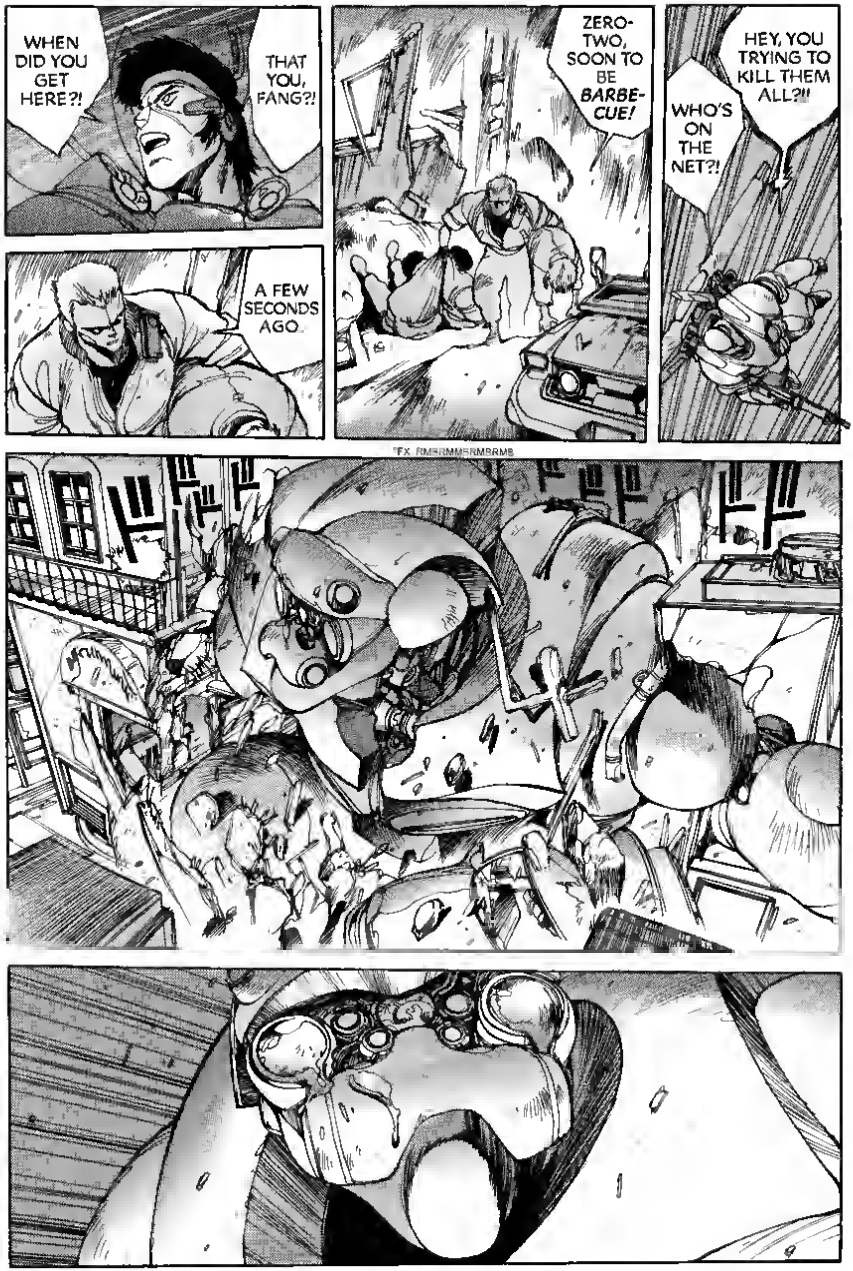

KLIK
HERE THEY COME!
D-DAMMIT! I CAN'T--
FX. KCHAK
I'D LIKE TO TEAR OFF AN ARM OR LEG OR TWO, THOUGH BY "MISTAKE."
FX. KRASSH
KLIK
DON'T SHOOT THE "HONORABLE AMBASSADOR" BY "MISTAKE"
FX. KRANCC
FX. KRSSH
STOP! DON'T PANIC!
FX. SKRASHOOM

FX KRNCH
FX WHKROOM
FX RKOOM

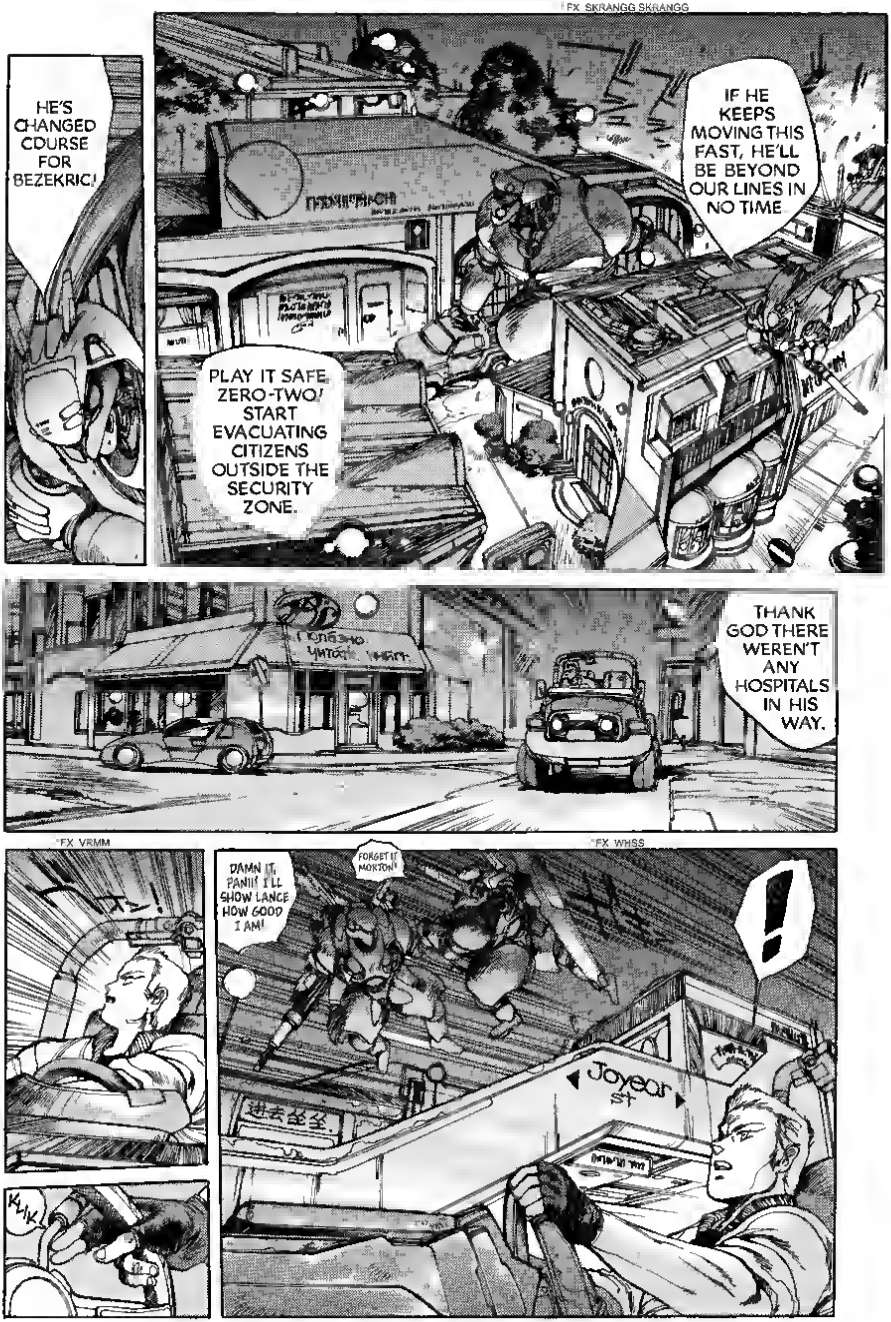

*FX SKNCH
*FX VNN
HNH?!
*FX SKRASSH
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME!
BUT YOU DIDN'T STOP HIM. DID YOU?
*FX SKITAK KRAK KRSH


FX SKRASSH
FX WHKROOM
MY EYES...!
ズン!
FX SKNCH
FX OOOOSH
!
FX BUDDA BUDDA
FX SHFF
K-KANG

FX VWHOOSH
FX WHKROOM
FX KANG
FX RMERMBRME
FX WHSSHH
PHEW
KOK
WASN'T ME SECOND-ARY EXPLO-SIONS
OVER-DID IT, SUDO.


WHEN DID YOU GET HERE?!
THAT YOU, FANG?!
A FEW SECONDS AGO.
ZERO-TWO, SOON TO BE BARBE-CUE!
WHO'S ON THE NET?!
HEY, YOU TRYING TO KILL THEM ALL?!!
*FX. RMRMMMRMRMB

*FX THDD
HE'S TALKIN' ABOUT OUR PAL SOKAKU...
*FX FUON
*FX WHSSHHH
THAT BROUGHT ME BACK.
I TURNED OVER A SUSPICIOUS AGITATOR TO SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS, AND THE IDIOTS LET HIM GET AWAY.
WHERE'D YOU CRAWL IN FROM?
SHE TURNED HER GUGES OVER TO SHAMALA AND DISAPPEARED. NOT A PEEP FROM HER SINCE.
BOLT'S OUT SEARCHING FOR DEUNAN.
FX SKRANGG
THREE, JUST ONE LEFT, THOUGH
HOW MANY CYBORG RIFLES DID YOU SEE?
*FX SKRANGG SKRANGG
KAINISU, SIR! OVER HERE!
FRØYA


HE'S CHANGED COURSE FOR BEZEKRIC!
FX SKRANGG SKRANGG
IF HE KEEPS MOVING THIS FAST, HE'LL BE BEYOND OUR LINES IN NO TIME.
PLAY IT SAFE, ZERO-TWO! START EVACUATING CITIZENS OUTSIDE THE SECURITY ZONE.
THANK GOD THERE WEREN'T ANY HOSPITALS IN HIS WAY.
FX VRMM
DAMN IT, PANIII! I'LL SHOW LANCE HOW GOOD I AM!
FORGET IT MORTON!
FX WHSS
Joyeux st
KLIK

*FX SKREEEE
WA--?!
?!
I HAD THE AMPLIFICATION UP TOO HIGH! SHIT!
DAMN! IT'S BLOWN MY MINOLTA NOCTO-VISION!
PATCH ME THROUGH!
MORTON AND SAUDI. PANI'S THERE, TOO.
CAN'T SEE--!
WHAT THE HELL--?
WHO'S IN THE GUGES-D AT THE WEST END OF JOYEAR STREET?!
HQ, OVER
-CHICK-
ZERO-TWO TO HEAD-QUARTERS DO YOU READ?

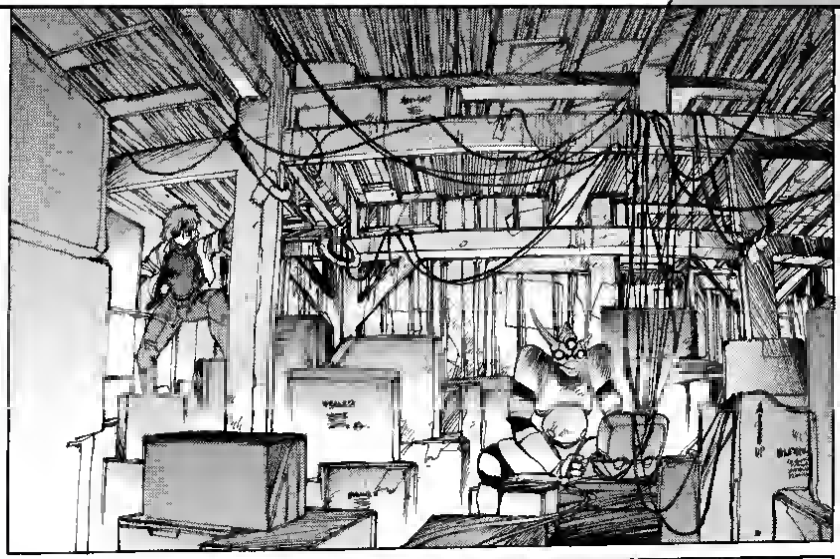
P3: A PROTECTION LEVEL USED FOR CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

ZERO-TWO?! IS THAT YOU?!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU GET WASTED, BUT PROTECT YOUR GEAR!
ALL RIGHT, YOU ASSHOLES! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU UP TO?! BE MORE CAREFUL WHEN YOU'RE USING P3 EQUIPMENT!
IT'S THANKS TO IDIOTS LIKE YOU THAT WE'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL!
I'M CHECKING ON YOU *BECAUSE* IT'S AN EMERGENCY!
PLAYING BY THE BOOK IN AN EMERGENCY LIKE *THIS*?!
NOW!!
COME DOWN AND POP YOUR HATCHES!
FX: KSSH
WHERE'S NUMBER THREE?! WHERE'S SAUDI?!
JUST BECAUSE WE WEREN'T PROGRAMMED TO BE PERFECT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN TALK LIKE THAT, YOU BASTARD!
WHAT WAS *THAT*?!
DAMN! HOW STUPID CAN THESE HUMANS GET?!

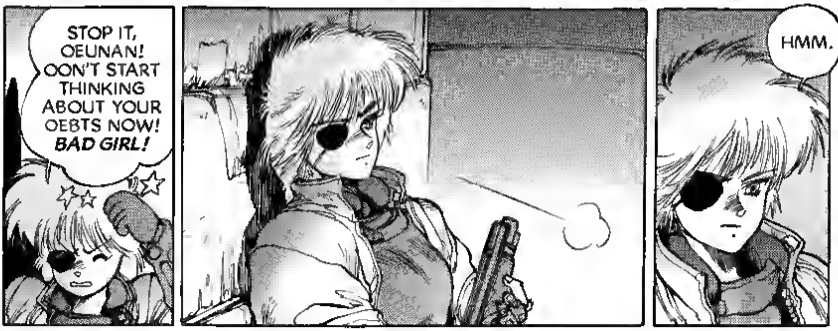
THAT BASTARO'S DIFFERENT FROM THE OFFICIAL EMBASSY NOTICE THEY SENT US! WE CAN TAKE HIM OUT UNDER STANDARD CRIMINAL CODE, NO PROBLEM!
MORTON WAS SAYING HE'D TAKE OUT THE GIANT...!
WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING HIM? YOU BEEN PAID OFF, HUH?!
WHAT WERE YOU TWO FIGHTING ABOUT?
SAUDI'S AT OUR FALL-BACK POSITION.
WE CAN'T GET BY WITH FAKEO TERRORISM, TRANSPARENT ASSASSINATIONS BY PROXY... NOT HERE. REMEMBER WHAT OUR REAL MISSION IS.
MORTON, IF THE WORLD WAS AS SIMPLE AND PRETTY A PLACE AS YOU SEEM TO THINK IT IS, NONE OF US WOULD HAVE TO RAISE A SWEAT.
THEN WHY?!
BIOROIDS CAN'T BE BOUGHT, MORTON.
SFX: SKSSS
HE ACCEPTS THE NOTION THAT "SUPPRESSION" MAY NECESSITATE THE DEATH OF THE VIOLENT PARTY.
I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR DEDICATION TO HELPING AEGIS, BUT "COOPERTION" THAT OVERSTEPS ITS BOUNDS JUST GETS IN THE WAY.
IT'S NECESSARY TO SUPPRESS VIOLENCE, BUT IF WE ABANDON THE LAW TO DO IT, THEN WE'RE THE ONES WHO'LL BE JUDGED--BY OUR OWN SIDE!
SO I GUESS THIS MEANS YOU'RE NOT GOING TO PRAISE HIS INITIATIVE.
OUR OBJECTIVE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND WILL ALWAYS BE COEXISTENCE, NOT SUPPRESSION!
WHAT GOOD IS MOUTHING THE PARTY LINE GOING TO DO, HUH? THE ENEMY'S A GODDAMN SCUMBAG! HE'S NOT ONE OF YOUR PERFECT BIOROID PSEUDO-PEOPLE!

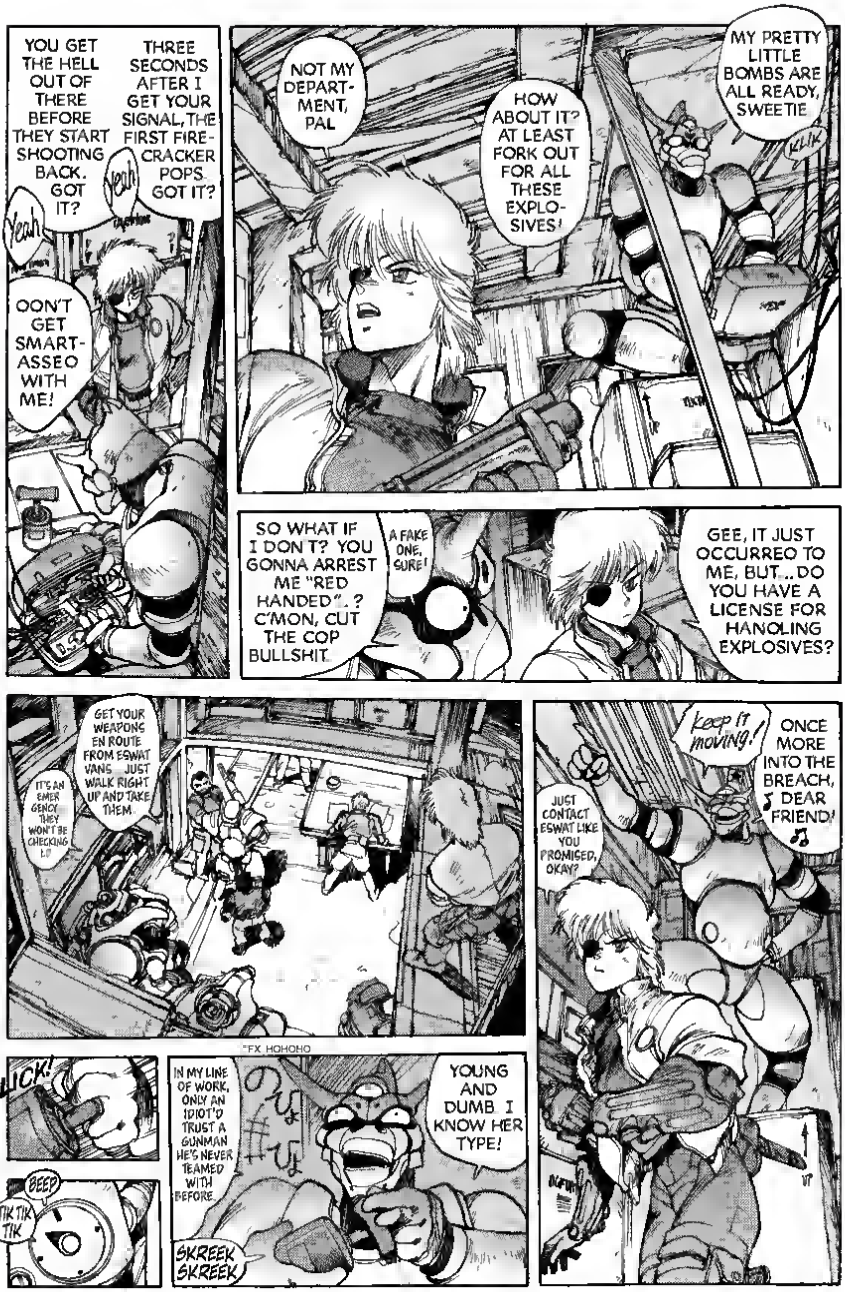
East-West opposition becoming "East-West vs A," or in short "A vs B" (for example, the bioroid-supporting faction vs the opposing faction) doesn't resolve any problems. Because Morton fights with a "third-party enemy mentality," he can't see the principle of coexistence. "Total coexistence" itself is his biggest issue. The one thing Fang fails to understand is that terrorism is a cancer, and cancerous cells can't coexist with a human body.

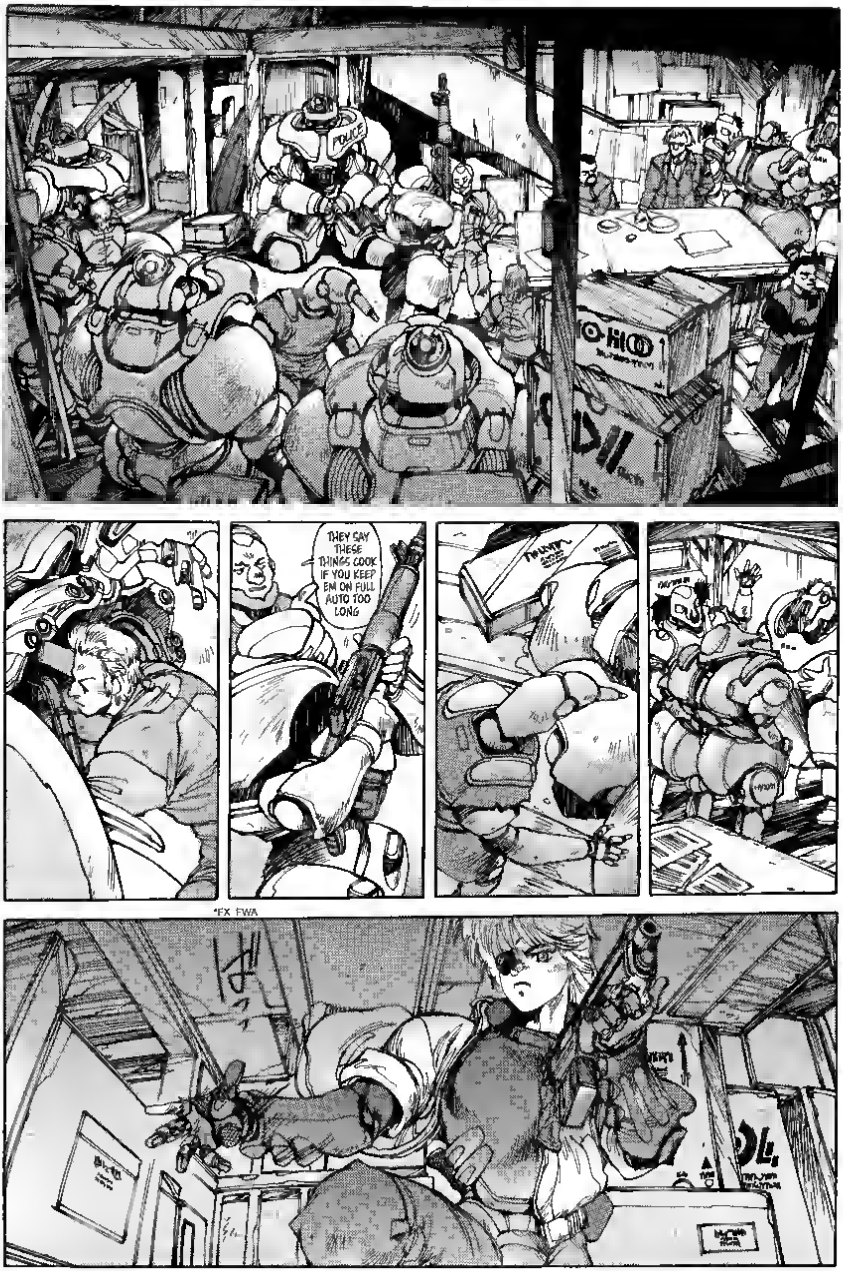
THAT'S WHAT WE BIOROIDS ARE FOR! YOU MADE US TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK FOR YOU.
SO THAT'S IT, HUH?! "YOU HUMANS AREN'T GOOD FOR ANYTHING-- JUST STAY AT HOME"--?
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO ARGUE ABOUT THE FINAL ANSWER. THAT'S FOR YOU ALONE TO DECIDE.
AND YOU SURE CAN'T LEAVE THE CHOICE TO SOME BLOODY BIO-ROBOT!
I THINK THE CITIZENS AND MY FRIENDS ARE BOTH IMPORTANT! YOU CAN'T COMPARE THEM!
DIRTY WORK, HUH? LIKE LEAVING YOUR PARTNER TO DIE IN A SWAMP?!
IS IT YOUR HUMANISM TO FORGET THE SAFETY OF THE CITIZENRY?
IF MY FRIEND WOULD ABANDON THE LAW, THEN I WOULD ABANDON HIM.
FX: RAM
YOU'RE NOT NEEDED HERE ANYMORE. I'LL REPORT THE TRANSFER TO LANCE.
WHY MEEE?
PANI.. YOU AND MORTON DELIVER THESE MEN TO STATION SEVENTY-TWO.



CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND THIS HIGH-BROW HOBBY OF MINE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH GOOD OLD POISONINGS AND DROWNINGS, YOU ASK? THEY GOT NO CLASS SEE? NO CLASS AT ALL.
IF I WANTED MONEY, HONEY, I'D START A FLOWER SHOP OR A MINERAL-WATER BAR.
AW, COME ON. HOW ABOUT IF WE SPLIT THE HUNDRED GRAND?

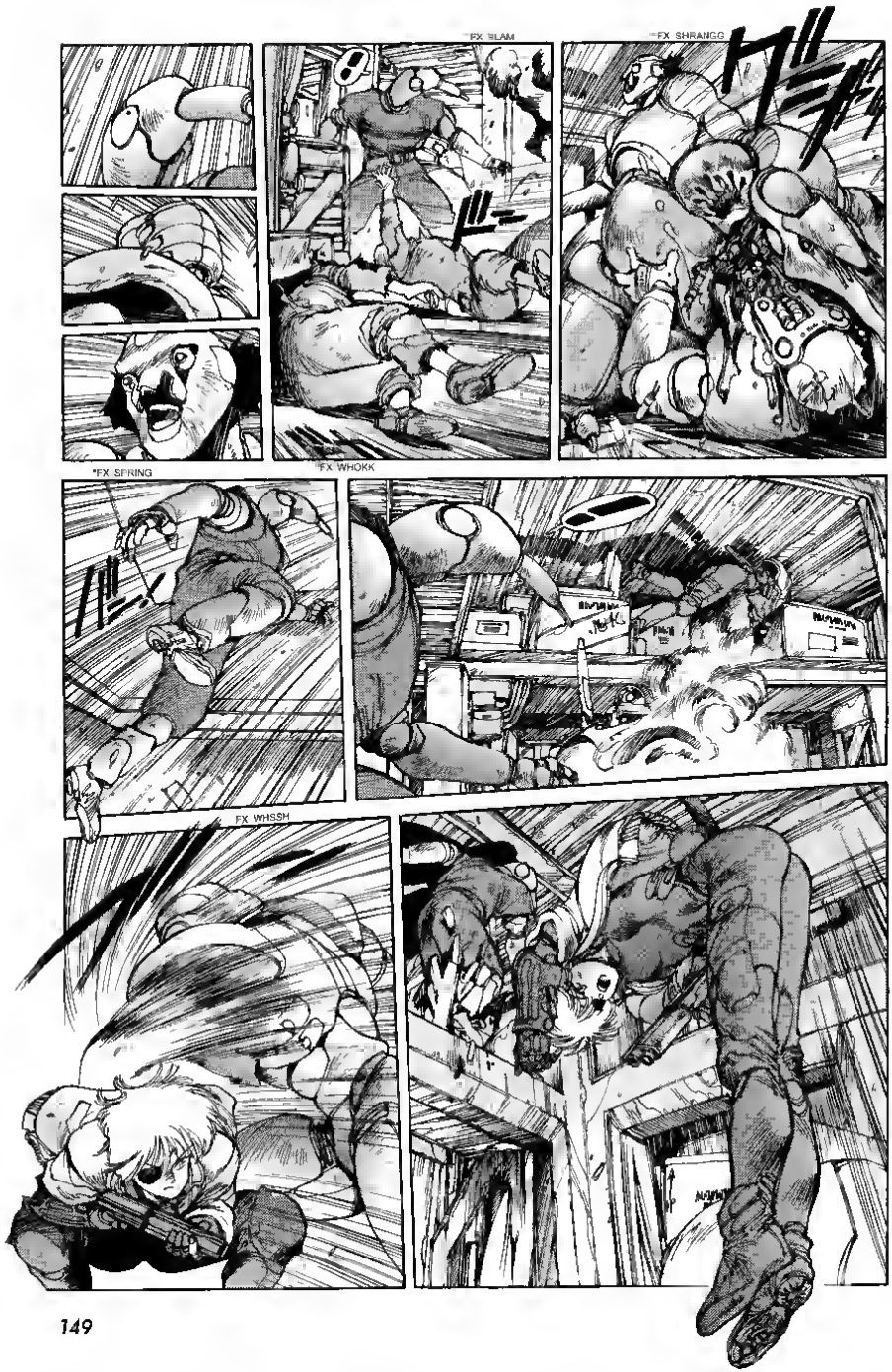

STOP IT, OEUNAN! OON'T START THINKING ABOUT YOUR OEBTS NOW! BAD GIRL!
HMM.


YOU GET THE HELL OUT OF THERE BEFORE THEY START SHOOTING BACK. GOT IT?
Yeah
THREE SECONDS AFTER I GET YOUR SIGNAL, THE FIRST FIRE-CRACKER POPS. GOT IT?
Yeah
OON'T GET SMART-ASSED WITH ME!
NOT MY DEPART-MENT, PAL
HOW ABOUT IT? AT LEAST FORK OUT FOR ALL THESE EXPLO-SIVES!
MY PRETTY LITTLE BOMBS ARE ALL READY, SWEETIE
KLIK
SO WHAT IF I DON T? YOU GONNA ARREST ME "RED HANDED"..? C'MON, CUT THE COP BULLSHIT.
A FAKE ONE, SURE!
GEE, IT JUST OCCURRED TO ME, BUT.. DO YOU HAVE A LICENSE FOR HANDLING EXPLOSIVES?
GET YOUR WEAPONS EN ROUTE FROM ESWAT VANS... JUST WALK RIGHT UP AND TAKE THEM.
IT'S AN EMER GENCY. THEY WON'T BE CHECKING I.D.
Keep it moving!
ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH, ♪ DEAR FRIEND! ♫
JUST CONTACT ESWAT LIKE YOU PROMISED, OKAY?
*FX HOHOHO
CLICK!
BEEP
TIK TIK TIK
IN MY LINE OF WORK, ONLY AN IDIOT'D TRUST A GUNMAN HE'S NEVER TEAMED WITH BEFORE.
YOUNG AND DUMB I KNOW HER TYPE!
SKREEK SKREEK

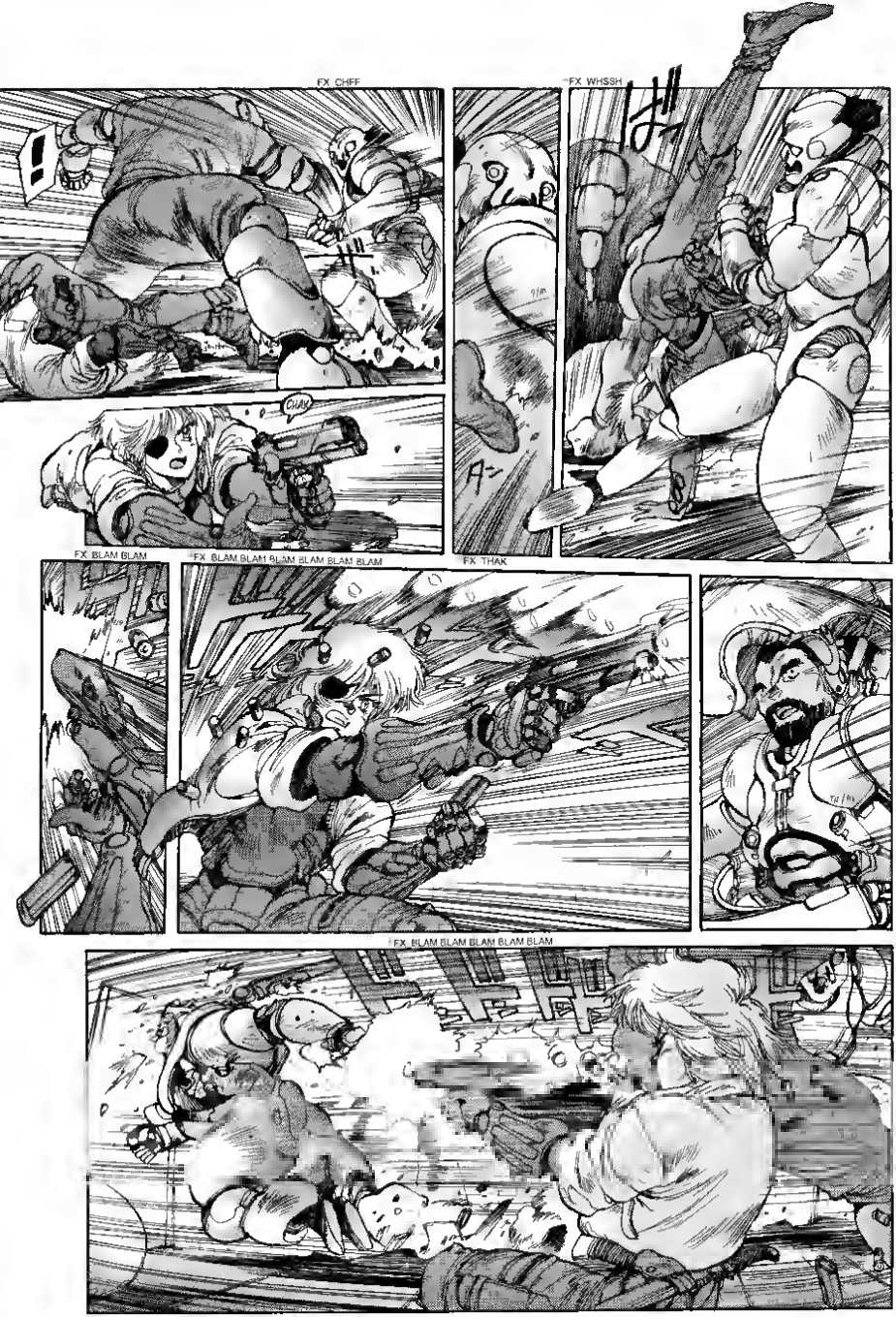

POLICE
THEY SAY THESE THINGS COOK IF YOU KEEP 'EM ON FULL AUTO TOO LONG
*FX FWA

*FX SHFF
NO.1842
KILL AND DESTR
50 BEAR
FX CHIK
FX WRAM
*FX TING
AARGH!

*FX: SLAM
HRNK!
*FX: KANG
WHA--?
*FX: WRAM
*FX: SPAK


*FX SLAM
*FX SHRANGG
*FX SPRING
*FX WHOKK
FX WHSSH

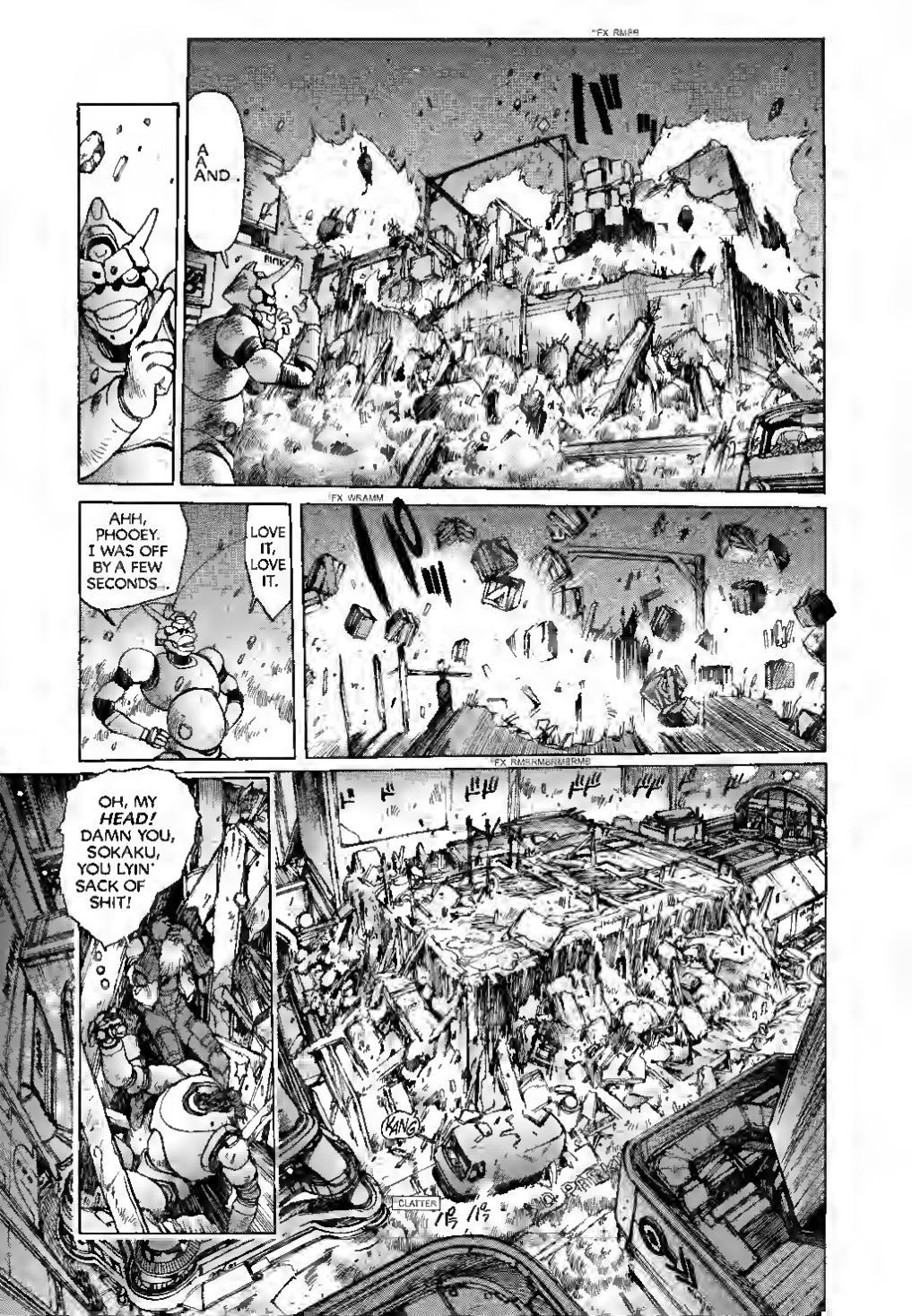
FX. WHSSH
*FX. BLAM
*FX. BLAM
FX. WHDD


FX. CHFF
FX. WHSSH
CHAK
FX. BLAM BLAM
FX. BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
FX. THAK
FX. BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

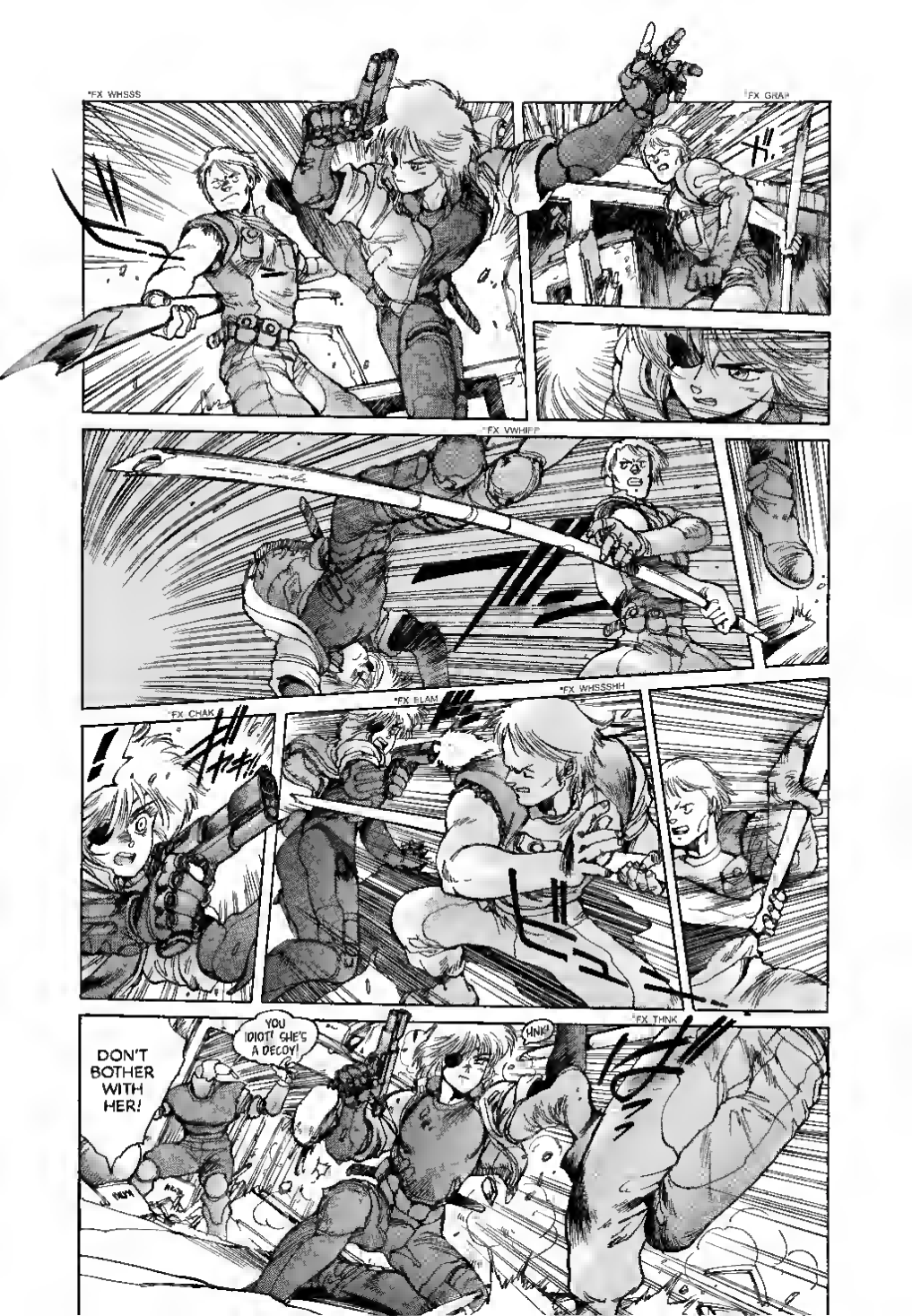
MOVE!!
SCATTER!
FX SKRASSH
EEK!
FX KLK
カチ!
BEEP
FX BKOOM
ドン!
FX WHBKROOM
WH--
WHAT
THE
HELL?!
FX SLAM SLAM
FX WHDD

FX RMERMBRMGRMBRERMS
YAAAHH!
FX WHKROOM
KOOM
SPAK
FX RAM POP POP POP
WHOOPS, LOOKS LIKE ONE OF 'EM GOT AWAY. HURRY YOUR BUTTS OVER HERE, GUYS...
JUST NEED COMPENSATION FOR SOME EQUIPMENT, SIR—GOT THE LIST RIGHT HERE--LET ME--HUH? OH NO, FORGET THE MEDALS, SIR. UH-UH. JUST NEED MY (hee hee) HUNDRED GRAND, YOU BETCHA..
LIKE I'M ALWAYS SAYING, MAN. THERE AIN'T NO ONE BUT ME COULD BLOW THE JOINT WITHOUT BURYING HER ALIVE. EVEN MADE HER AN ESCAPE ROUTE, SEE?
FX WHO OOM

*FX KRAKK
FX GRNK
HUP!
*FX RMBRMBRMBNMB
*FX KRAK
FX WHOA
*FX SKNCH
WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPEN-ING?!
YOU OKAY?!
FX RMBBRMMBB


*FX RMBB
A AND.
RINK
*FX WRAMM
AHH, PHOOEY. I WAS OFF BY A FEW SECONDS..
LOVE IT, LOVE IT.
*FX RMBRMBRMBRMB
OH, MY *HEAD!* DAMN YOU, SOKAKU, YOU LYIN' SACK OF SHIT!
KANG
CLATTER
CLATTER

*FX BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
Oh
damn!
*FX SPRING
!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
*TMP TMP TMP

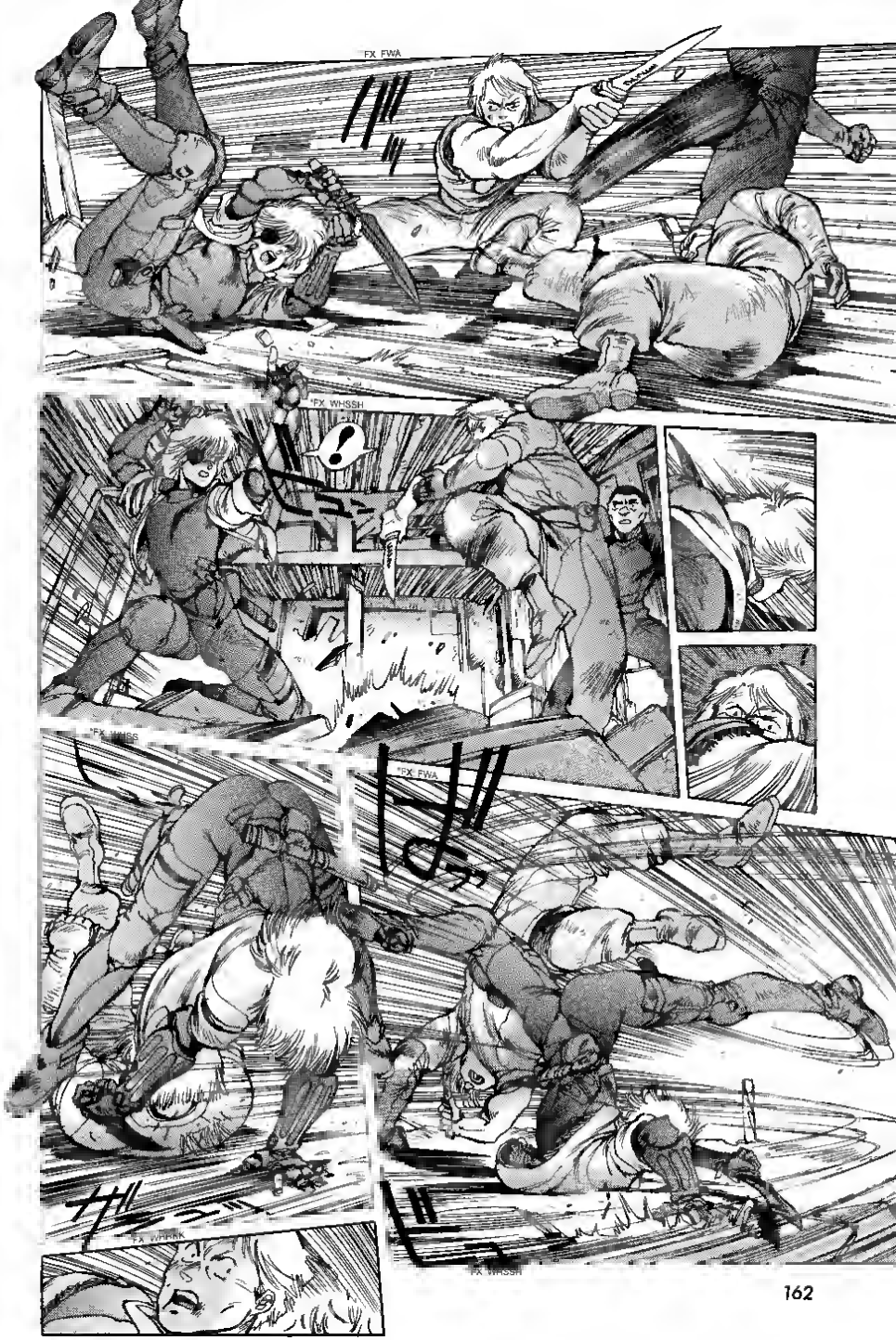

*FX WHSSS
*FX GRA
*FX VWHIF
*FX CHAK
*FX SLAM
*FX WHSSSHH
*FX THNK
DON'T BOTHER WITH HER!
YOU IDIOT! SHE'S A DECOY!
HNK!

*FX SKRKK
WHSSH
FX KANG
*FX RYU
VNN
*FX THNK
FX WHSSH

*FX. SKRASSH
I'LL BREAK THROUGH THE WALL!
GET OUTSIDE AND SCATTER!
HOLY CHRIST!
YOU LOOK FOR AN EXIT!
YOUR PLANS HAVE FAILED... GIVE IT UP, GENTLEMEN!
YOU GOT NO WAY OUT!

SURRENDER AND BECOME OUR PRISONERS. OR FIGHT AND DIE HERE AND NOW!
CHOOSE YOUR PATH!
THIS ROOM IS BURIED UNDER THE WRECKAGE. ESWAT WILL DIG US OUT.
FX SHINGG
*FX SHINGG
*FX WHSSS
*FX SHINGG
YOU'LL REGRET THIS...
SHKK
MAKE HER DEFEND TO THE RIGHT! LEAVE HER OPEN FOR ME!

FX KSSH
HRK!
*FX ZASH
FX WHSSS
HAH!
FX WHHKK
FX WHSSS


FX FWA
FX WHSSH
!
FX WHSS
FX FWA
FX WHSSH
FX WHSSH

SNIFF
*FX WHOK
GODDAMN! MY BLIND SIDE!
*FX KANG
*FX WHSST
SHE BLOCKED ME?!
*FX WHDD

FX SKRASSH
FX WHAM
FX THUK
"WHAP WHAP"
FX THD

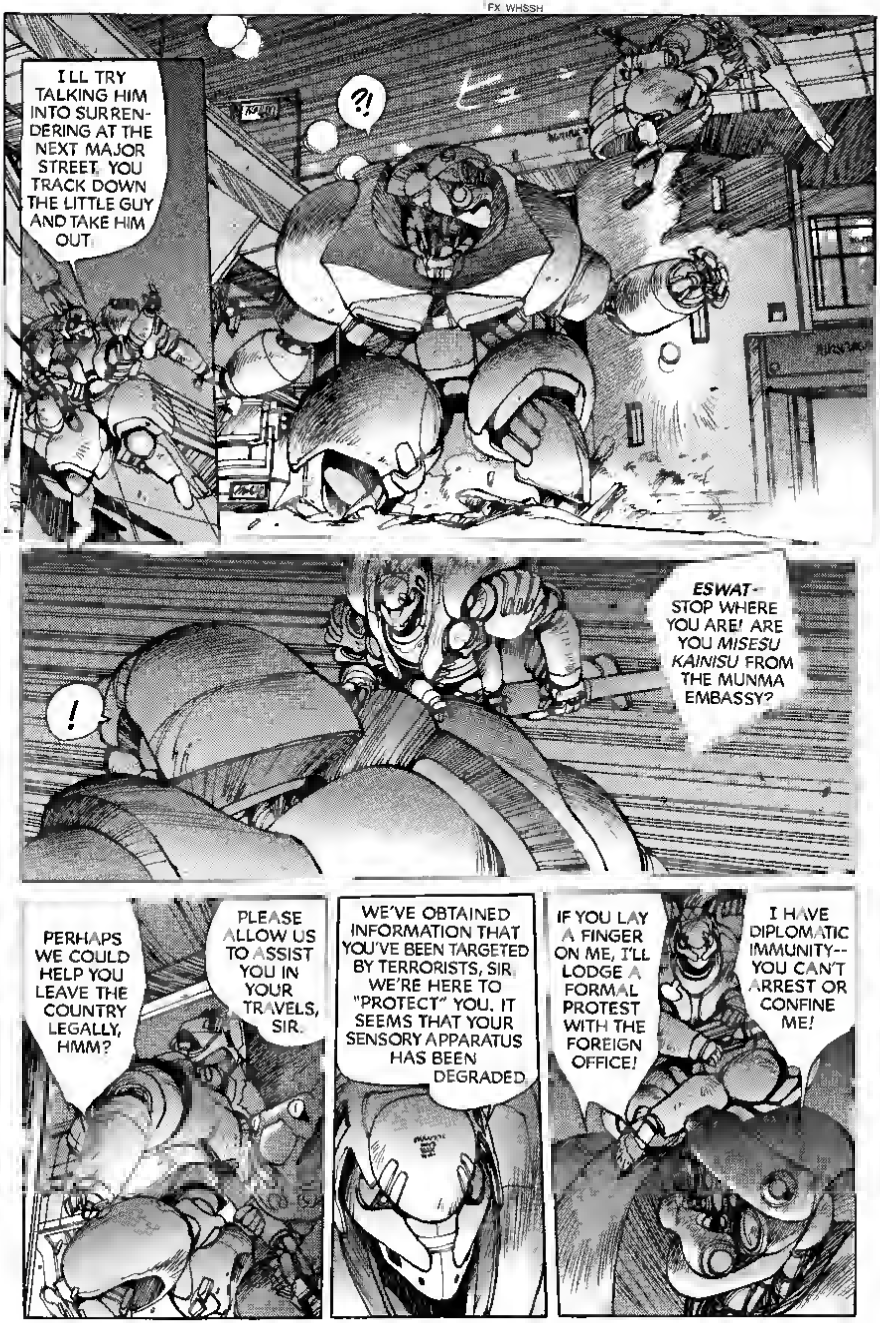
THWOK
!
*FX WHMP
HRK!
*FX KRAKK
*FX LUNGE
*FX THUNK
URK!
*FX CHOKK

FX WHSST
FX WHOO
AAH!
HAA!
WHROKK
HYAA!
FX FWMP

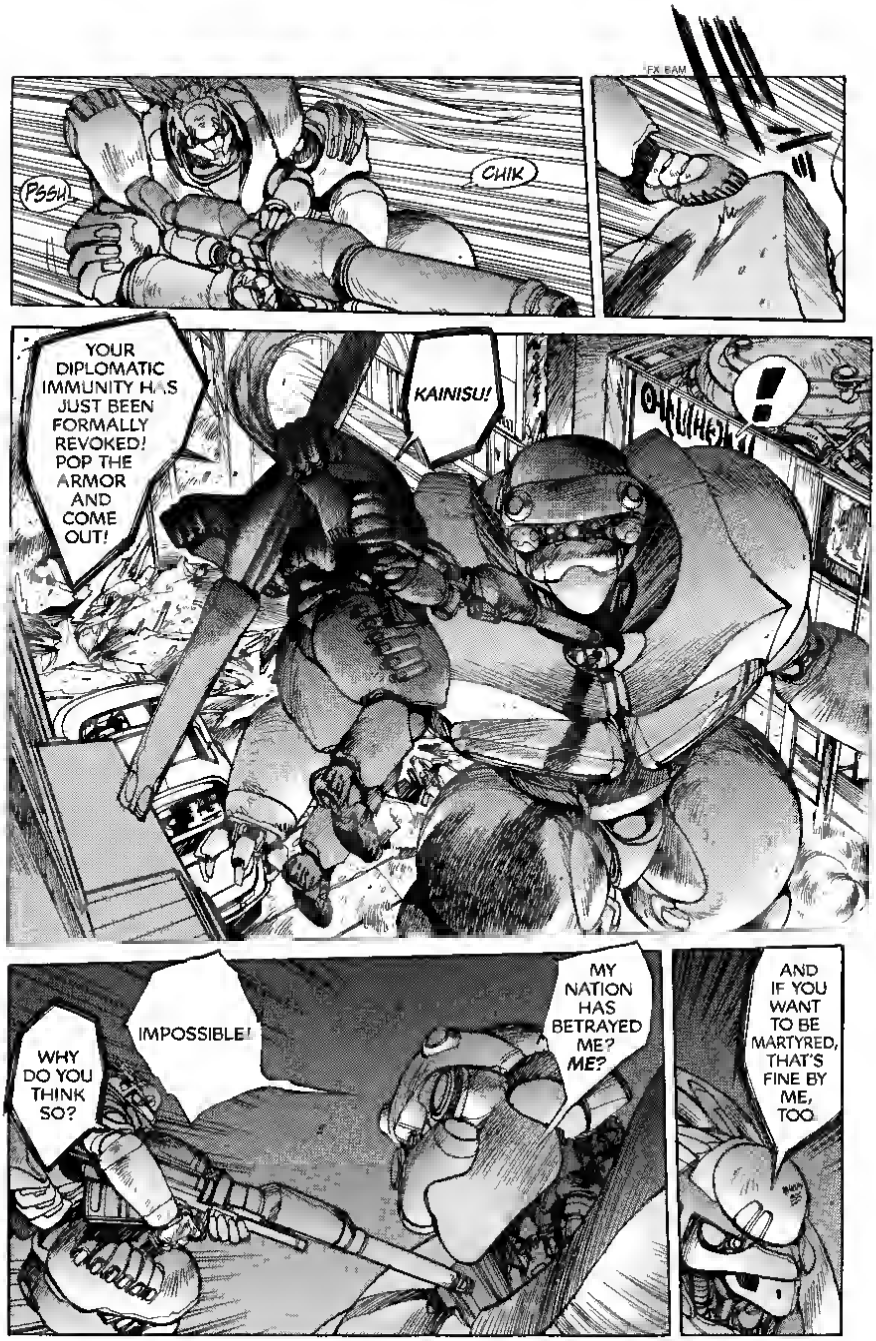
UHH.
COME ON! COME ON!
IS THAT IT?!
FX THUK
YOU WIN. WE GIVE.

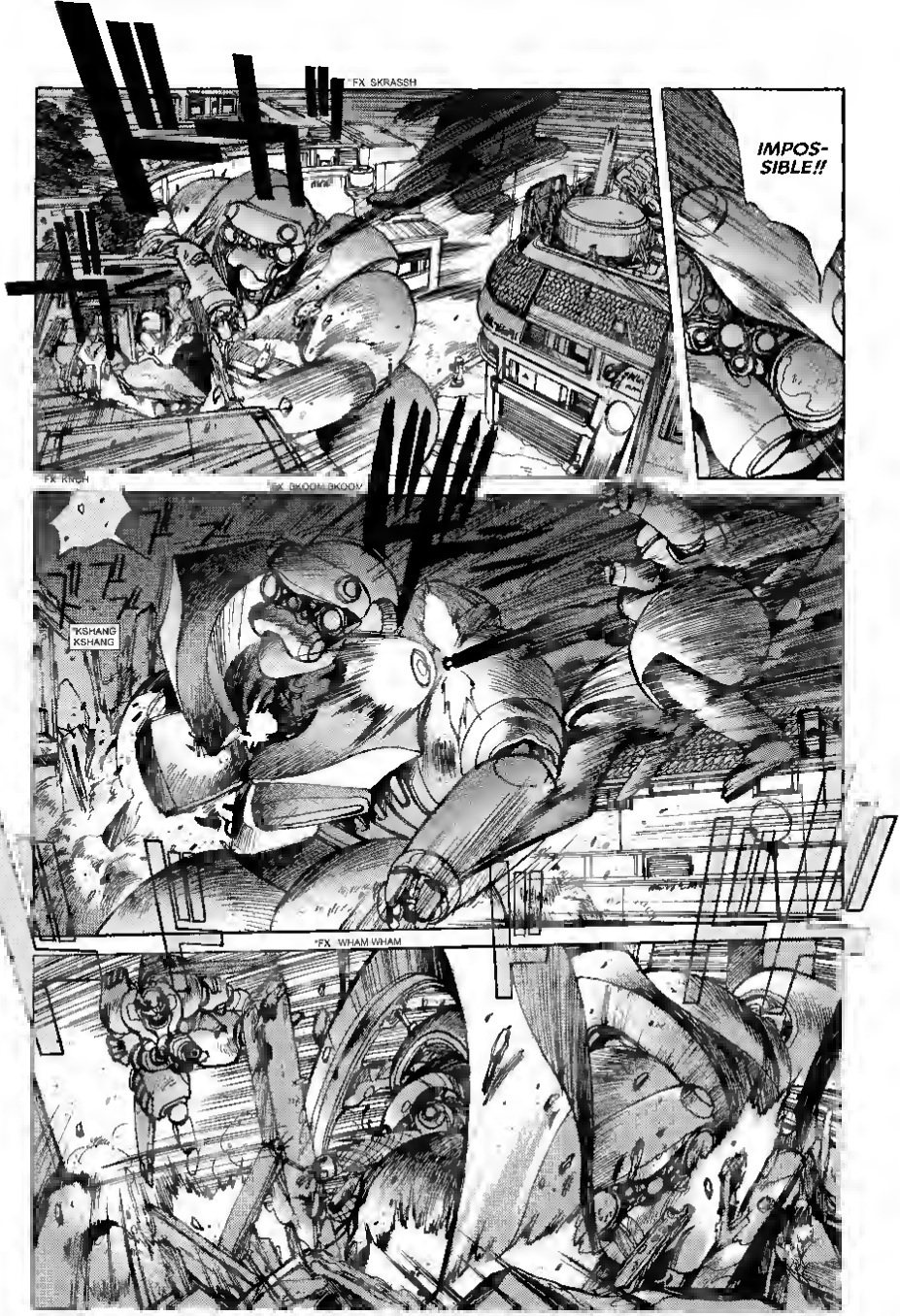
I CAN'T CONTINUE THE MISSION WITH MY ARM LIKE THIS, AND WE'RE OUT OF TIME ANYWAY...
EVEN IF WE *DID* TAKE YOU OUT AND GOT OUT OF HERE, YOU BITCH, WE'D JUST GET SHOT BY *ESWAT.* END OF STORY.
SO... WE SURRENDER TO ARREST UNDER THE TERMS OF THE GENEVA CONVEN--
DON'T PUSH ME!!
HNN!
"ONE-EYE" IS LOOKING GOOD. DON'T KNOW WHY WE WORRIED ABOUT HER OVER...
HOSHY PUMS BUSTY!
ZERO-THREE TO HEADQUARTERS. SIX DEAD, THREE INJURED, TWO ESCAPES TARGET SUPPRESSED.
KLIK
DROP IT! ESWAT!
FX: KRNN KRAK
MOK TROPPO
FWA
FX: HYUU
SHIT!
FX: CHUK

FX: KSHANGG
KSHANG KSHANG
DRN DRN DRN
WHERE'S THE LITTLE BORG?
HE'S MOVING INTO THE BEZEKRIC AREA!


FX WHSSH
I'LL TRY TALKING HIM INTO SURRENDERING AT THE NEXT MAJOR STREET. YOU TRACK DOWN THE LITTLE GUY AND TAKE HIM OUT.
?!
!
ESWAT--STOP WHERE YOU ARE! ARE YOU MISESU KAINISU FROM THE MUNMA EMBASSY?
PERHAPS WE COULD HELP YOU LEAVE THE COUNTRY LEGALLY, HMM?
PLEASE ALLOW US TO ASSIST YOU IN YOUR TRAVELS, SIR.
WE'VE OBTAINED INFORMATION THAT YOU'VE BEEN TARGETED BY TERRORISTS, SIR. WE'RE HERE TO "PROTECT" YOU. IT SEEMS THAT YOUR SENSORY APPARATUS HAS BEEN DEGRADED.
IF YOU LAY A FINGER ON ME, I'LL LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE!
I HAVE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY--YOU CAN'T ARREST OR CONFINE ME!

!
DON'T MOVE!
KICH
*FX SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
*FX TAK
TGK TGK, TGK!
*FX KANG
*FX BRTTTTTT
*FX WHOO
BEEP BEEP
ONE-THIR-TEEN HERE.
TWO-ONE HERE.
*FX FWM!
TAKE OUT THE GIANT.
WE'VE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT.
I SAID DON'T MOVE FELLA! KJ!!!


FX: BAM
PSSH...
CHIK
YOUR DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY HAS JUST BEEN FORMALLY REVOKED! POP THE ARMOR AND COME OUT!
KAINISU!
!
AND IF YOU WANT TO BE MARTYRED, THAT'S FINE BY ME, TOO.
MY NATION HAS BETRAYED ME? ME?
IMPOSSIBLE!
WHY DO YOU THINK SO?


*FX. SKRASSH
IMPOS-
SIBLE!!
FX. RRGH
*FX. BKOOH. BKOOH
*KSHANG
KSHANG
*FX. WHAM WHAM

PLAM
FX DOOOSH
FX WHSS IH
HARD TO MISS WHEN THE TARGET'S THAT BIG.
POOT POOT
POLICE

Note: the equipment in panel six makes that sound when the anti-debris intrusion lids open. The collar-looking things are gas pressure releases.

FX: SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
FX: HYUUU
FX: SPANGG TANG SPAK
FX: SPAK SPAK
FX: KANG
FX: SKRUNCH
STOP! CEASE FIRE, YOU IDIOTS! THEY'RE JUST RICOCHETING OFF HIM!
OOF
FX: VRTTTTT
FX: TANG TANG

*FX. KSSH
FOUND HIM!
EXCELLENT! GOLD SQUAD, MOVE TO SURROUND HIM!
*FX. VRRRTT
*WREEE
*FX. KIN KIN KIN KIN KIN
WHKOOOM
*THUP THUP THUP THUP
AAARGH!
FX. SPAK SPAK CHK

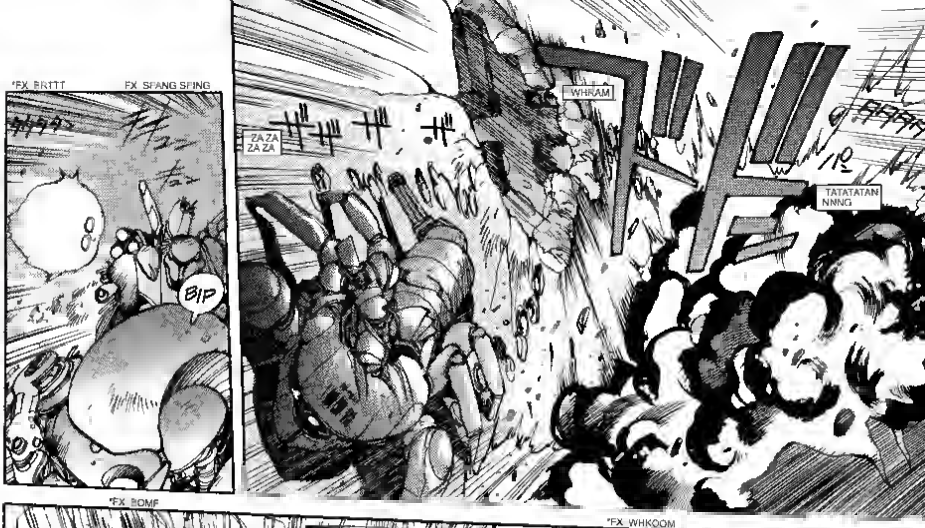
VRRRTTT
WHEEEE
FX BKOOM BKOOM
OOF!
FX VRTTTT
FX BLAM

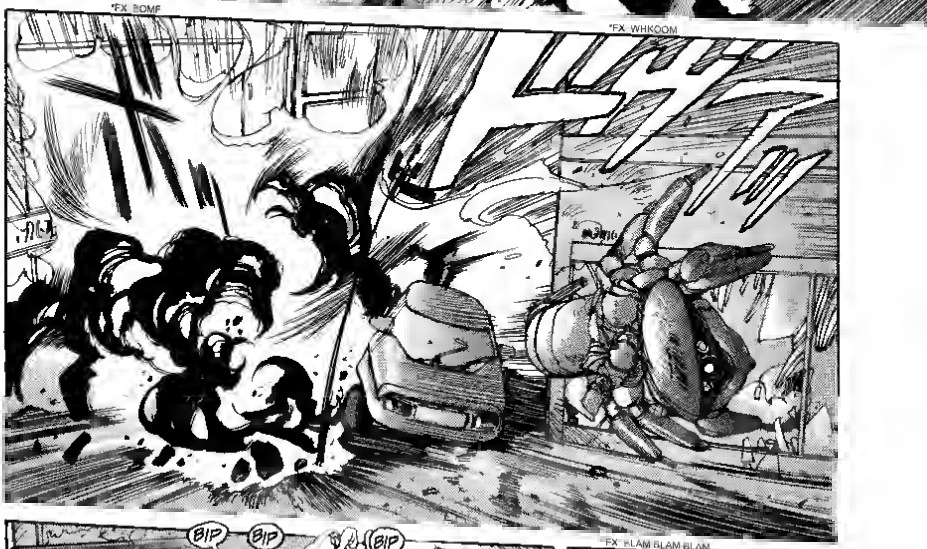
FX TATATATAN
FX VRTTT VRTTTTT
WHO THE HELL'S GONNA REBUILD EVERY-THING, HUH?
KYU
BAM
FX WHAMM
GYAA!
FX KRASSH
FX BLAM BLAM
LEAVE HIM TO US! GET THE HELL OUT OF OUR WAY!!
COME ON. GIVE US LOCALS A CHANCE, EH?
FORGET IT, YOU TURKEYS!
FX WHSSHH

FX: KANG
KAINISU!!
SUDO! TO YOUR LEFT!
*FX: VRRTTT
HUH?
*FX: TLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
*FX: BLAM BLAM
*FWHOOSH
!

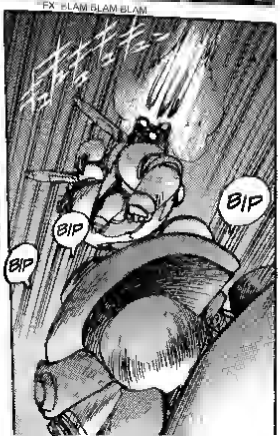
E. KNCH
*FX. KCHAK
*FX. SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
HE'S GOT A HECATON-CHIRES SYSTEM!
HE CAN TAKE OVER THOSE ESWAT AUTOBOTS AND CONTROL THEM!
LUCKY THEY DIDN'T SEND A ROBOT GUN PLAT FORM!
KROOOM
KROOOOM

In the middle of the six barrels is a sight/camera eye. Smoke and impacts render it ineffective.

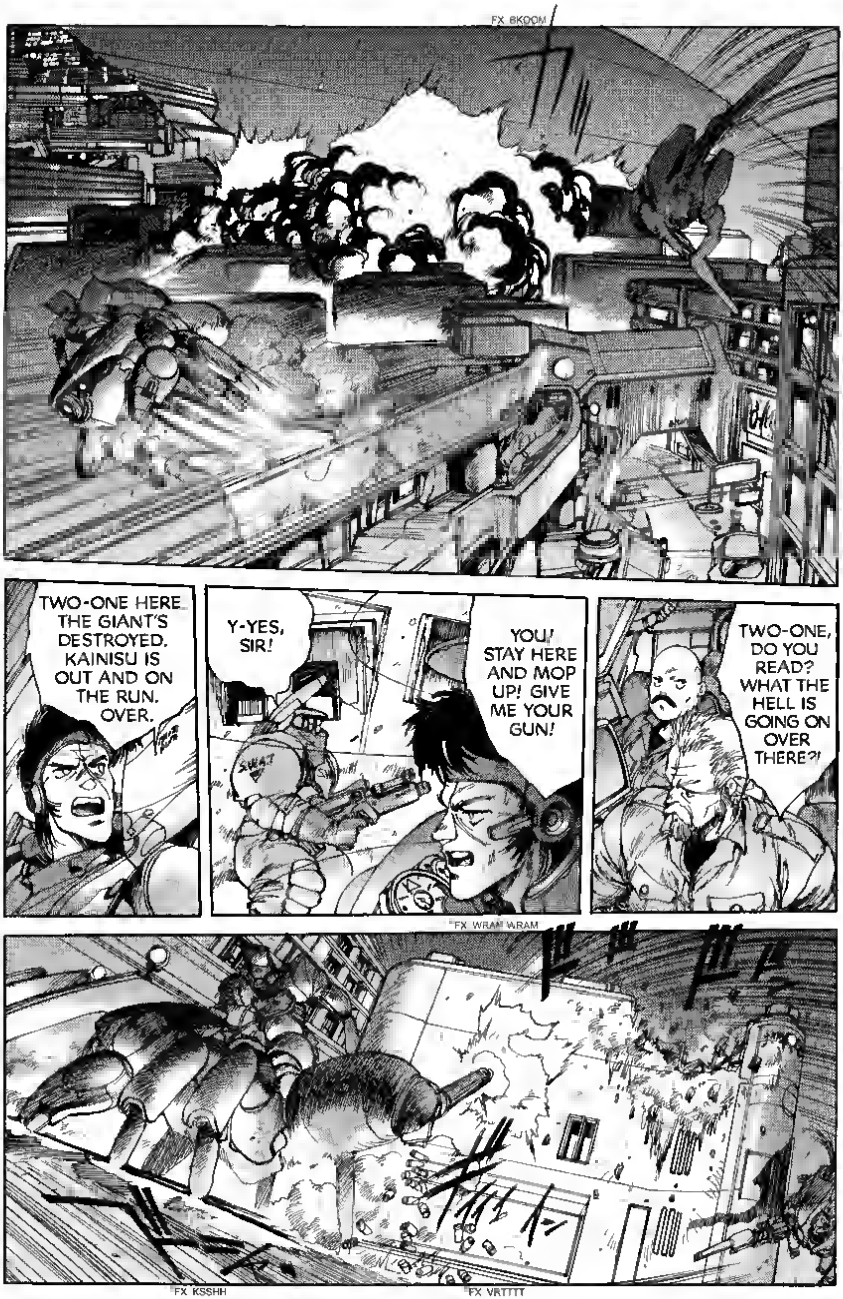

*FX. BRTTT
FX. SFANG SFING
BIP
ZA-ZA ZA-ZA
WHRAM
TATATATAN NNNG

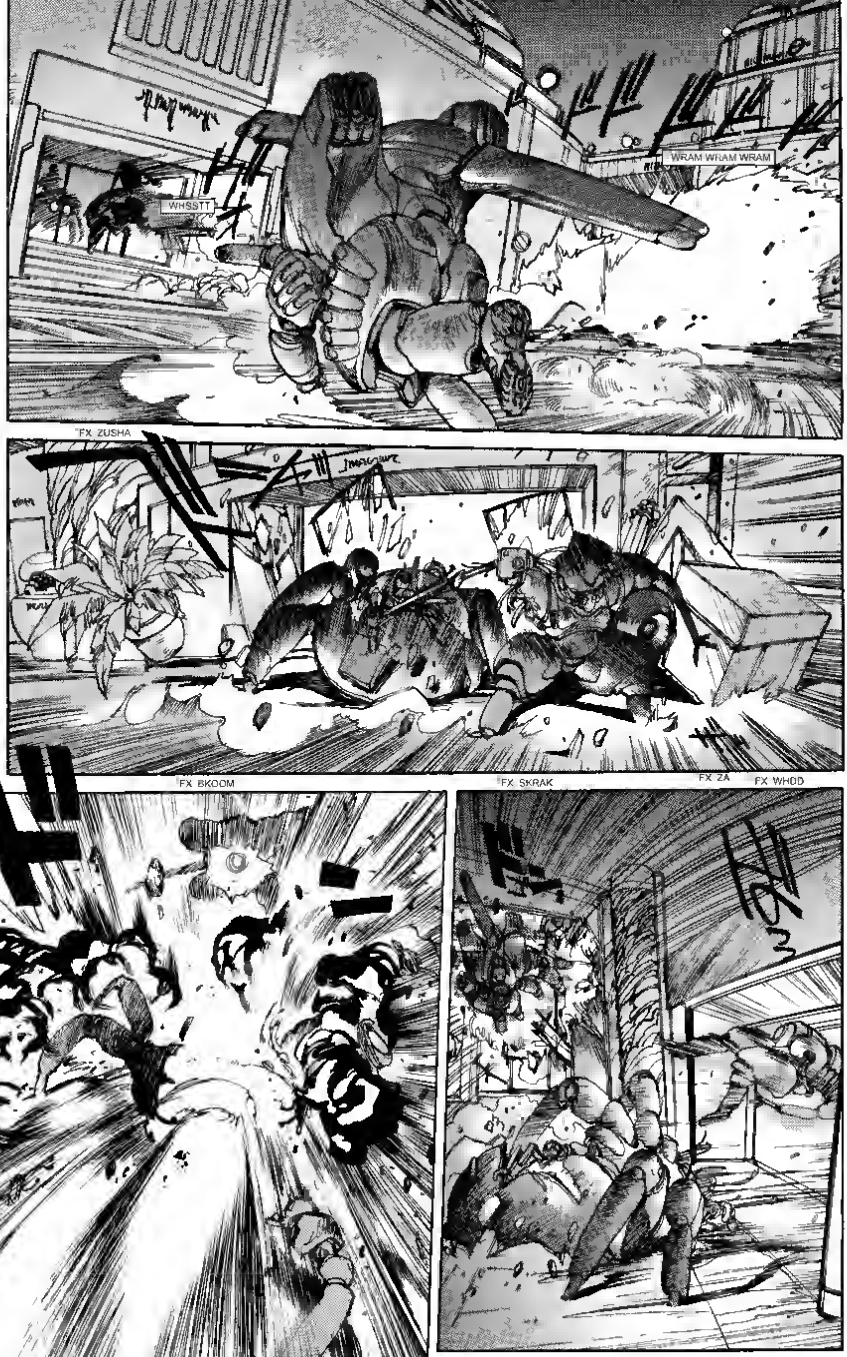

*FX. BOMF
*FX. WHKOOM

BIP
BIP
BIP
*FX. BROM BROM BROM


*FX. KLAM KLAM KLAM
BIP
BIP
BIP

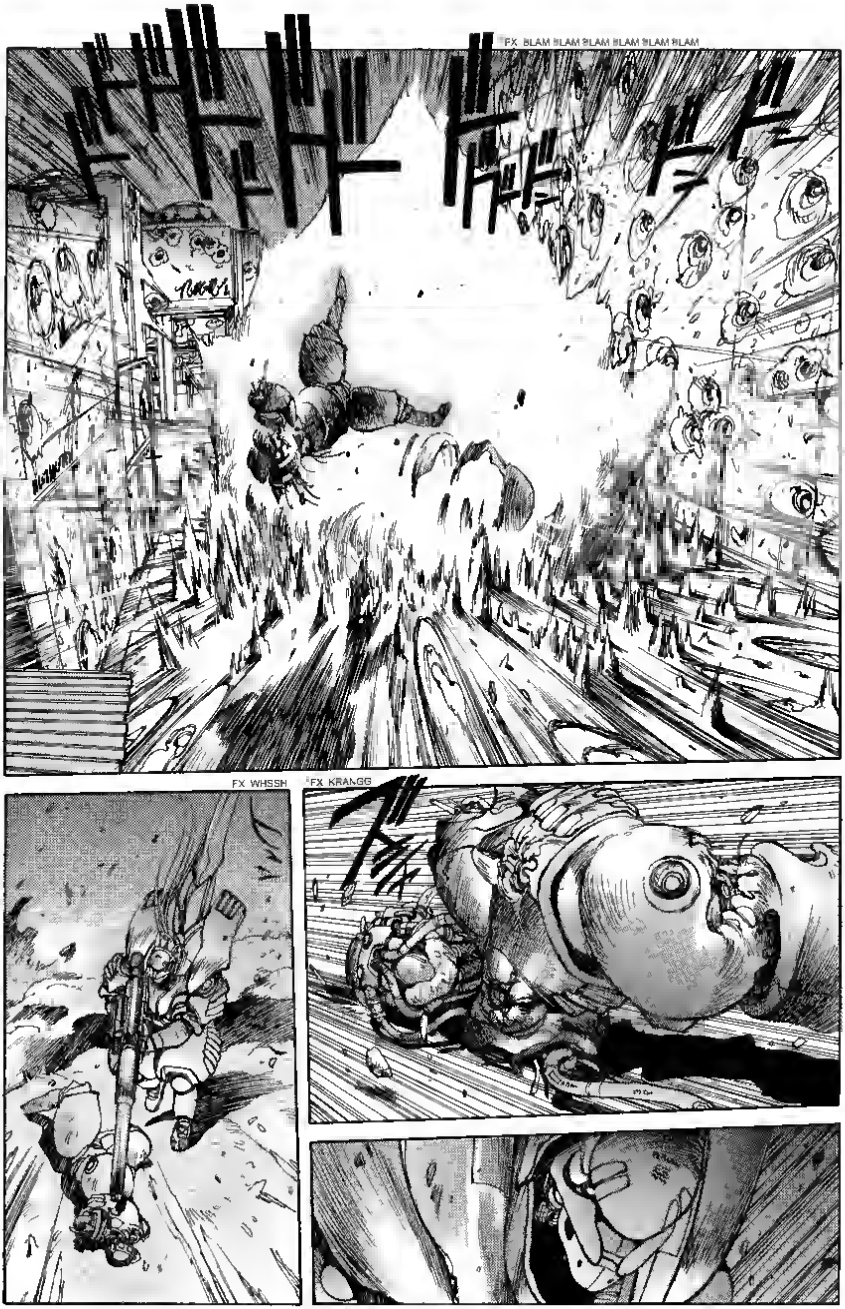
*FX. KLIK KLIK
*FX. BIP BIP B P BIP BIP BIP BIP
CHAK
FX. BLAM
*FX. WHKROOM
*FX. BOM!

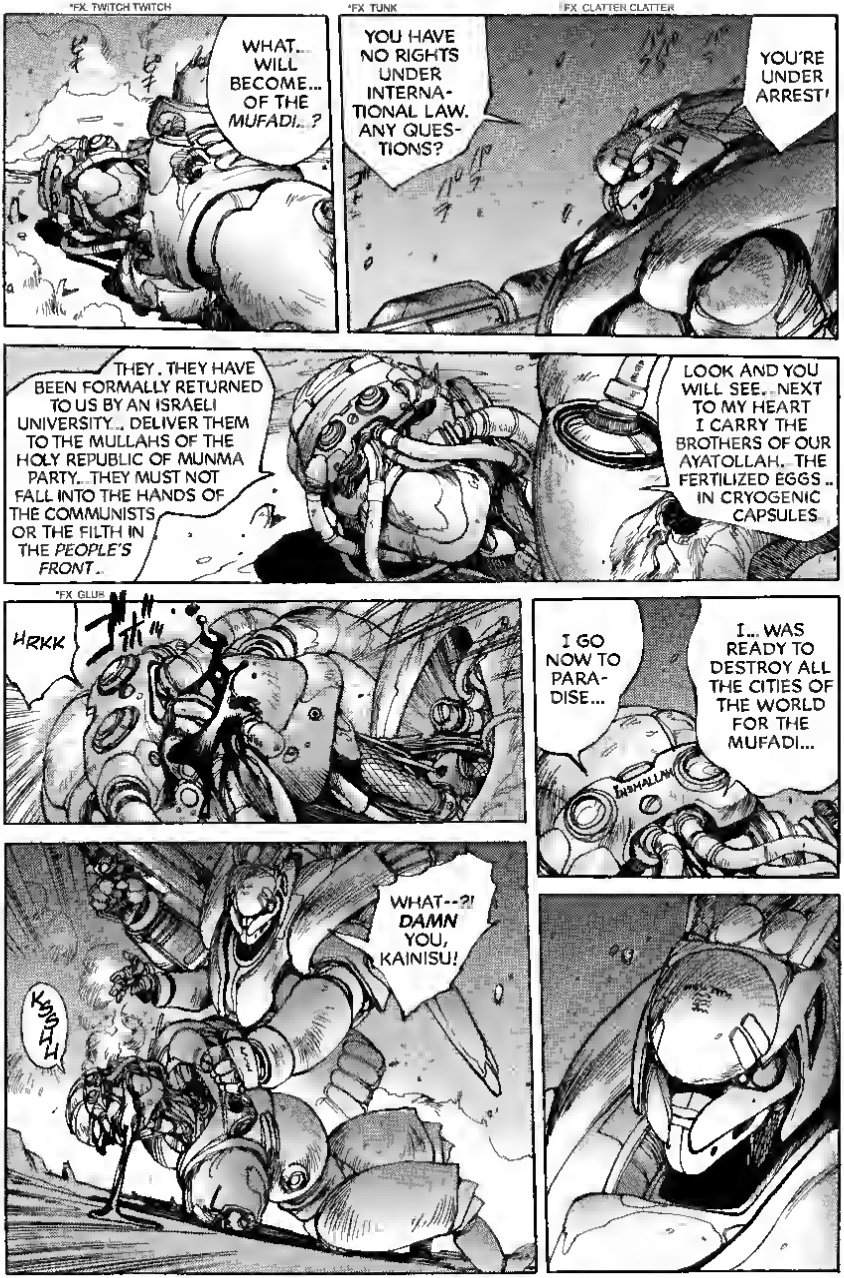

FX: BKOOM
TWO-ONE HERE. THE GIANT'S DESTROYED. KAINISU IS OUT AND ON THE RUN. OVER.
Y-YES, SIR!
YOU! STAY HERE AND MOP UP! GIVE ME YOUR GUN!
TWO-ONE, DO YOU READ? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OVER THERE?!
FX: WRAM WRAM
FX: KSSHH
FX: VRTTTT


WHSSTT
WRAM WRAM WRAM
FX ZUSHA
FX BKOOM
FX SKRAK
FX ZA
FX WHOD

FX: WHSST
FX: CLAK CLAK CLAK
FX: BUBURUBU
FX: VREEE
FX: SKRANGG
FX: SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
HNNG!
FX: WHSST

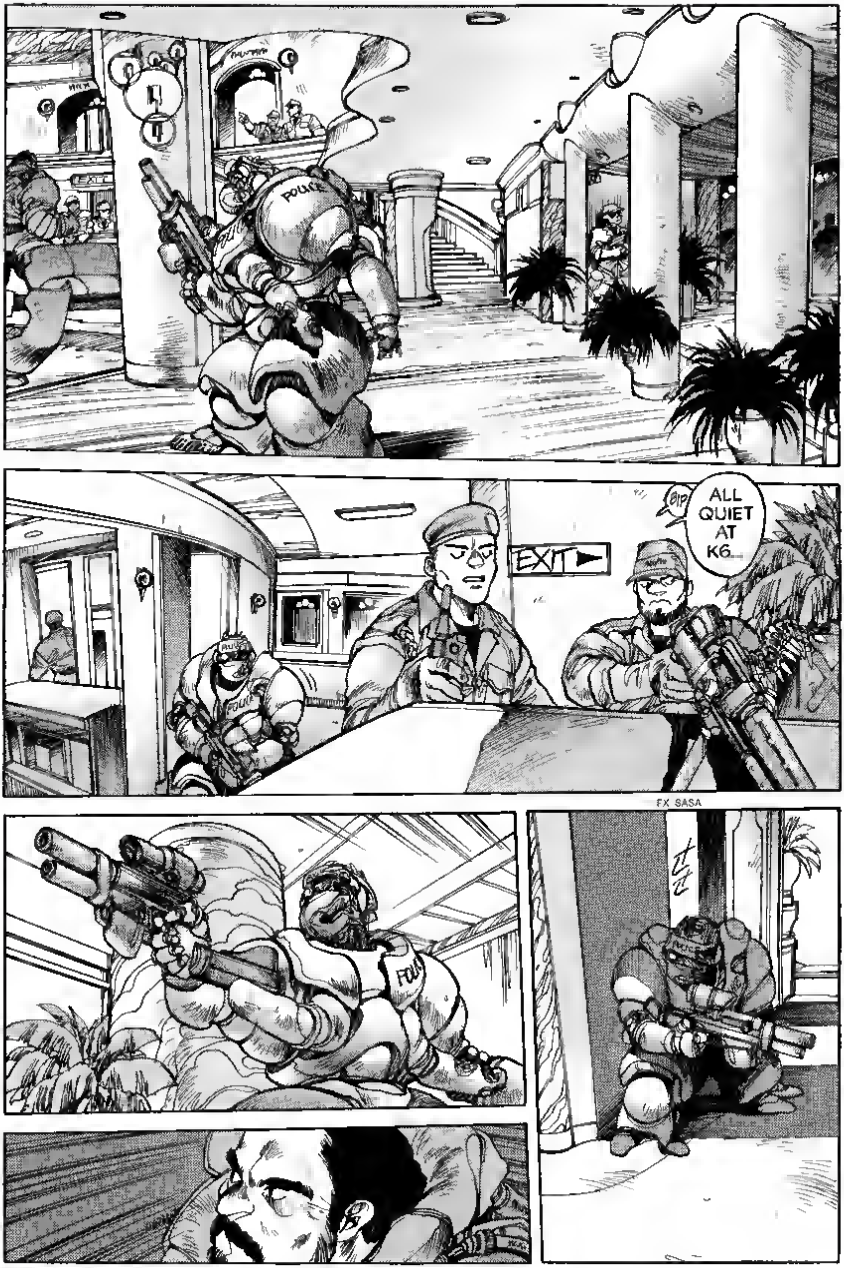
FX WRAM
BKOOM
FX WKOOM


FX BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
FX WHSSH
FX KRANGG


*FX: TWITCH TWITCH
WHAT... WILL BECOME... OF THE *MUFADI...?
*FX: TUNK
YOU HAVE NO RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW. ANY QUESTIONS?
*FX: CLATTER CLATTER
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!
THEY. THEY HAVE BEEN FORMALLY RETURNED TO US BY AN ISRAELI UNIVERSITY... DELIVER THEM TO THE MULLAHS OF THE HOLY REPUBLIC OF MUNMA PARTY.. THEY MUST NOT FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS OR THE FILTH IN THE *PEOPLE'S FRONT..
LOOK AND YOU WILL SEE.. NEXT TO MY HEART I CARRY THE BROTHERS OF OUR AYATOLLAH.. THE FERTILIZED EGGS.. IN CRYOGENIC CAPSULES
*FX: GLUB
HRKK
I GO NOW TO PARA-DISE...
I... WAS READY TO DESTROY ALL THE CITIES OF THE WORLD FOR THE MUFADI...
WHAT--?! *DAMN* YOU, KAINISU!
KSSH H

PIPIPI--
=KCH=
PI
PI
PI
PI
PI
FX ZRCH
WORK
STUDIO
KEE
RIGH

HEY!!
POLICE
SWAT
THAT ASSHOLE KAINISU GOT HIMSELF KILLED ALREADY?! IS THE MISSION SCRUBBED?
PIPIPI~
KCH
COVER THE BACK ALLEY! YOU, TAKE UP POSITION ON OUR FLANK!
WHAT?!
TWO RED LANDMATES HEADED THIS WAY! THEY'RE ARMED!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I SCREWED UP SO BAD, ME OF ALL PEOPLE...
I'VE LOST MY CHANCE TO PULL OUT. THEY MUST HAVE GOT MY FACE ON VIDEO AT THE WAREHOUSE...


POLICE
EXIT
ALL QUIET AT K6...
FX SASA

*FX SKREEK
ミシ
NO ONE HERE BUT US CHICKENS.
GOD DAMN IT!!
?!
HMM?

SCARE-CROWS? OR A TRAP?!
THEY'RE TOO SLOPPY!
FX: ZRSH
I'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE... PROBABLY TOO LATE AL-READY..
SO THAT WAS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH...
SUPPRESS HIM... NO SHOOT-ING!
BABY'S COMIN' TO PAPA, OVER.
FX: LUNGE
EXIT
SHIT!
POLICE

FX VMMM
SORRY, BUT YOUR AMMO IS FAKE, TOO
YOU GOT CARE-LESS, MAJOR.
?!
FX CHK CHK
POLICE
FX VMMM
NOW, LET'S DO THIS REAL BUSINESS-LIKE, HMM?
CHECK-MATE
DON'T GIVE US ANY TROUBLE, BUDDY... WHAT'S THE POINT OF GETTING BLOWN AWAY NOW?
MAGUS?! Y-YOU?!

THAT ONE-EYED BITCH...SO, NO ONE GOT AWAY...
FIGURED YOU'D SWAP SUITS SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE. WE MARKED ALL OUR UNIFORMS, JUST IN CASE.
ONE OF OUR PALS TIPPED US OFF ABOUT THE LANDMATE WE'VE BEEN TRACKING YOU FOR A KILOMETER.
E.S.W.A.T
I WANTED TO SEE YOU BREAK INTO THE SENATOR'S ROOM, BUT HELL, CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING, CAN YOU?
YDU SHDULD HAVE PULLED OUT SOONER GOTTA GIVE YOU CREDIT, THOUGH-- YOU SURE MADE TRACKS AS SOON AS YOU CAUGHT ON.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D MEET YOU AGAIN.
POLICE
MAGUS, YOU BASTARD .. I THOUGHT YOU'D BOUGHT IT FROM THAT MUSTARD GAS IN FAOH.*
*FX KSSHHH

Faoh: a place name
Mustard gas: a type of poison gas

!
CLIK
*SHUU
FX KRAK KRAK
FX SPLUKK
GET BACK!!
WHA ?!
JESUS, MAGUS!! WHAT D YOU SHOOT HIM FOR?!
HE'S RIGGED!

KLIK
HRRK!
WHEW!
JEEZ
TOO FRIGGIN' CLOSE... THE SAFETY'S OFF, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL BLOW... NOT FOR NOW.
YEG, SIR
FIX HIM UP UNDER P3 SECURITY, COMPLETE ISOLATION MAKE SURE THEY PULL THE CHARGE HE'S CARRYING, AND IF IT GETS DICEY, KILL HIM.
I GE' YUH M'GUS!! =K-HUKK=
WHY THE HELL DOESN'T HE BLACK OUT?
Y'GODDAN' COWAR'! I KIH' YUH! I GUNG KI' YUH!
THAT DAMN MAGUS IS NUTSO, MAN...

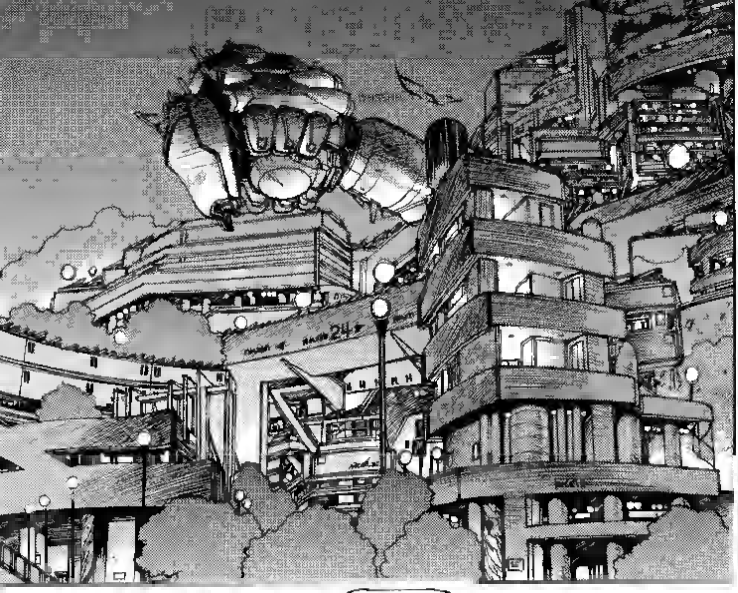
FX GRAB
WHAT THE F--
HUH?
HEY!
FX WHAM
SMART-ASS PUNK!
YOU GOT SOME-THING TO SAY TO ME, ROOKIE?! WELL?!
PONMO
JESUS, WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?

FX WHMFF
FOUR-FIVE TO CONTROL
BIP
JUST LIKE A SMART BOMB.
YOU WERE LOOKING AT A MAN WHO TOOK OUT TWO SAS PROS SINGLE-HANDED. YOU SEE HOW HE LAUGHED? HE WAS HAPPY TO BE TAKING ME WITH HIM.
THAT GUY'S NO MARTYR...HE'S A PRETTY FAMOUS FACE IN MY LINE OF BUSINESS.
HOW'D YOU KNOW HE WAS RIGGED, BOSS?

BY DAWN HE'LL BE OUT PAST THE CANARY ISLANDS IN HIS ESCAPE PLANE.
ESPECIALLY IF HE'S MOSSAD
THE GUY IN THE PHOTO WASN'T WITH HIM?
DON'T WORRY NOTHING'S BROKEN YOU MUST BE MADE OF STEEL
OW OW OW!
*FX KSSHH
THAT'S WHY I SAY...
YOU'VE GOT TO PULL FURTHER BACK TO DO YOUR SHARPSHOOTING YOU'VE GOT THAT GREAT AIM OF YOURS-- USE IT MORE EFFICIENTLY.
HMM
.. IF YOU'D JUST KEPT STATION OVERHEAD, THERE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY FIGHTING AFTER HE POPPED THE GIANT.

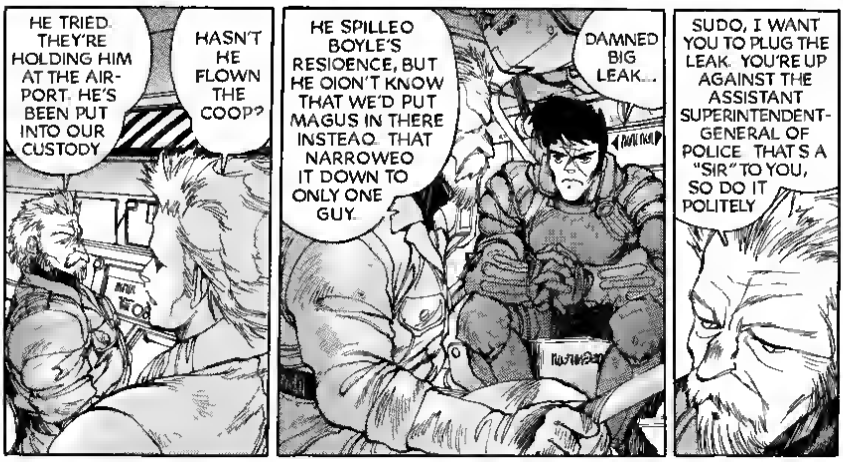
FORGET THAT TRAINING YOU GOT IN FIVE- AND SIX-PERSON SQUADS. GET USED TO FIGHTING IN PAIRS, AND DO IT FAST. THEN AIM FOR LEARNING TO FIGHT SOLO.
BUT YOU'RE JUST THE OPPOSITE. YOU COME IN TOO CLOSE, AND END UP WITH A NARROW FIELD OF FIRE.
WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT IF A GUY IS FIRING TOO FAR OUT, IT WON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SEND HIM BACK TO THE SHOOTING RANGE. WHAT HE NEEDS IS TRAINING IN *STALKING*, SO HE CAN GET THE QUARRY IN RANGE.
GO EASY ON THE FUN STUFF, EH?
YOU TOO, "PIRATE CAP-TAIN."
TWO-ONE, ZERO-TWO, COME WITH ME.
LISTEN TO ME, AND YOU'LL IMPROVE FASTER THAN IF YOU KEEP ON FOLLOW-ING EACH OTHER'S FAULTS.
RIGHT NOW YOU PLAY OFF EACH OTHER'S BAD HABITS, MAKE THEM WORK AGAINST YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE THE WEIGHT OR THE HORSEPOWER, SO YOU'VE GOT TO GO IN TIGHTER, GET UP CLOSE ONCE YOU'RE IN THERE, LET YOUR SPEED AND AGILITY WORK FOR YOU.
I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR WANTING TO USE YOUR KNIFE AND HAND-TO-HAND, BUT YOU CAN'T COUNT ON EVERYONE BEING SOFTIES LIKE THESE GUYS HERE.

I MUST BE GETTING OLD. I WAS REALLY *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU...
THAT'S THE BRIAREOS I LIKE BEST!
ONE-THIRTEEN ROGER, HQ.
ONE-THIRTEEN, YOU'RE ASSIGNED TO BOYLE'S PERSONAL SECURITY. IT'S NUMBER FIFTY-ONE ON JADIYA AVENUE, FLAT EIGHT.
AND MAKE SURE MISS YOU KNOW WHO DOESN'T TAIL YOU!
*FX: VWOMM
*FX: HYNN
WELL, SEE YOU LATER.
BUT--



HMM.

SAVE YOUR WHINING FOR YOUR REPORT. I'M BUSY!
SHE WAS SO BUSY PLAYING THE HERO SHE LET THE GUY IN THE PHOTO GET AWAY! THE ONLY ONE WHO *REALLY* COUNTED!
LANCE! IT WAS EXTREMELY BAD JUDGMENT TO USE ONE-OH-NINE ON THE OP!


HE TRIED. THEY'RE HOLDING HIM AT THE AIR-PORT. HE'S BEEN PUT INTO OUR CUSTODY.
HASN'T HE FLOWN THE COOP?
HE SPILLED BOYLE'S RESIDENCE, BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT WE'D PUT MAGUS IN THERE INSTEAD. THAT NARROWED IT DOWN TO ONLY ONE GUY.
DAMNED BIG LEAK...
SUDO, I WANT YOU TO PLUG THE LEAK. YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL OF POLICE. THAT'S A "SIR" TO YOU, SO DO IT POLITELY.

OUR MAN TRIED TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE CRAZED ARAB HAWKS WANTED TO FRAME BOTH BOYLE AND THE MUNMA HOLY REPUBLIC, WHILE HE KEPT HIMSELF HIDDEN IN THE CLOUDS? BULLSHIT. NO CONVINCING MOTIVE THERE. I DON'T BUY IT...
IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG WAR
IT'S FROM THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRET SERVICE, SIR...
SO THAT JUST LEAVES "THE MAN IN THE PHOTO."
IF THEY'D LET US GO AFTER IT SOONER, WE COULD HAVE CONTROLLED THE RISK MORE EFFECTIVELY.
WHAT ELSE WAS IT GOOD FOR?
COULD THE GIANT HAVE JUST BEEN BAIT TO SEE OUR NEW ESWAT EQUIPMENT AND TACTICS IN ACTION? OR WAS IT SOME GESTURE TO THE HAWKS?
The Imperial Americana Special Service deputy chief. All he did was increase demands and causes of terrorism, so they wanted to expel him.
WE WERE ABLE TO RID OURSELVES OF A NASTY PIECE OF WORK AND ROOT OUT A MOLE AT THE SAME TIME. PRETTY DECENT RESULTS, IF YOU ASK ME
EVEN IF THEY DID DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE HOLY REPUBLIC AND IMPERIAL AMERICANA, AT LEAST WE WERE ABLE TO KEEP BOTH MUNMA AND THE PUPPETEERS (MOSSAD) FROM ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES.
THAT WOULD GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO DEMONSTRATE OUR "DIPLOMATIC" SECURITY PROVISIONS.
THE COLONEL AND POLICE HEADQUARTERS MAY HAVE DELIBERATELY SAT ON THE KAINISU CASE UNTIL IT GOT OUT OF HAND.
OUR ALL-PURPOSE SLAVES, SECURITY WITH A LICENSE TO KILL. WHAT A DETERRENT
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY LIVES WE LOST?!
YOU CALL THESE "DECENT RESULTS"..?
DON'T BE AN IDIOT!!
*FX BAM

IF OUR SECURITY FOR THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING NEXT WEEK IS NO MORE EFFECTIVE, WE'LL BE LUCKY IF THEY DON'T DISBAND ESWAT ON THE SPOT.
IF BY SOME CHANCE YOU SHOULD BE RIGHT, THEN WE DIDN'T LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS. NOT EVEN CLOSE...
NO, SIR. JUST SPECULATION.
YOU HAVE ANY BASIS FOR THAT?
BUSY LITTLE UTOPIA WE'VE GOT HERE.
THINK SHE'LL WIN?
EVEN IF SHE WANTS TO, IT WON'T BE THE SAME AS A MEETING OF THE AEGIS COUNCIL. THIS IS THE U.N. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT--SHE CAN'T JUST USE THE 'EARS OF GAIA" TO FORCE A NATIONAL PLEBISCITE
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I'VE HEARD THAT ARTEMIS IS GOING TO PRESENT HER BIOROID-DIFFUSION LEGISLATION AT THE ASSEMBLY. TRUE?
THAT'S WHY YOU NEED AN ORGANIZATION LIKE US.
IT'S LIKE THIS WHEREVER PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK TOGETHER.

National plebiscite: it's not coercion, so it's not necessarily substantially a full plebiscite. It's just a yes-or-no vote, so there's no confusion. But as it's possible to deceive the citizenry, things such as TV debates and public disclosure within acceptable limits are vigorously undertaken. The council is thorough in its spread of information, so that citizens don't forget reality and go running after ideals. The examination of this information is also vigorously undertaken.

*FX BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
*FX BEEP
PUT HIM THROUGH.
DIRECTOR LANCE ON LINE THREE, MA'AM.
WE'VE INCREASED SECURITY FOR THE MOST LIKELY CANDI-DATES.
THAT REPORT, I SUPPOSE? MORE HUMANS DROPPING OUT OF OUR RANKS, THE FBI MESSING UP THEIR PAPERWORK, ALL THE EMBASSIES AND BUSINESS WORLD BIGWIGS RUSHING IN TO PLAY MUSICAL CHAIRS...
YES, I'M WATCHING THEM NOW. ABOUT THE RE-PORT.
THAT WAS A RATHER FLASHY PERFORMANCE TO HOLD JUST BEFORE A UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE BBC AND CNN HAVE ALREADY PICKED IT UP.

'SCUSE ME!
CHAK!
YES, MA'AM. WE'VE GONE ALONG WITH THE JUSTICE-MINISTRY DEAL.
WE'VE GOTTEN THE NAMES OF TWO MORE SPIES FROM THE SUPER-INTENDENT-GENERAL... YES, MA'AM--THAT'S RIGHT.

YES, MA'AM--YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN. WELL, THEN, PLEASANT DREAMS.
MY REPORT, BOSS, ALL TYPED AND PRETTY. SIGN IT SOMETIME, OKAY?
...
NO, MA'AM. WE'VE MARKED THEM, BUT WE'RE LETTING THEM SWIM ON FOR A WHILE.

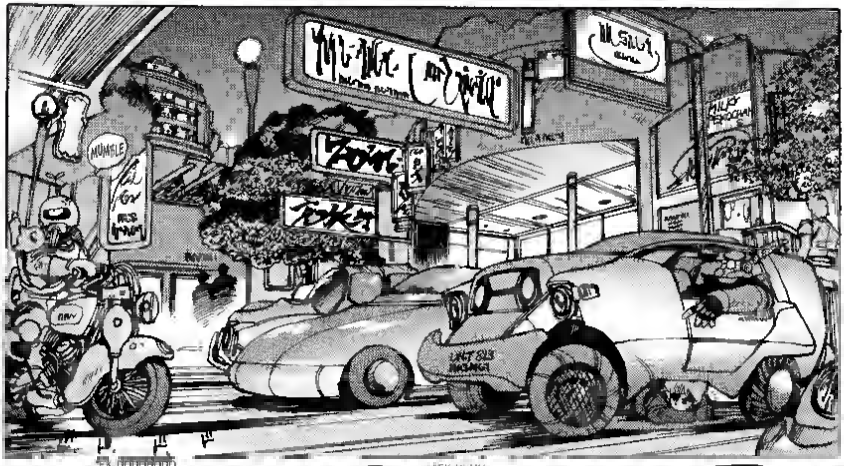
*FX: FLAP

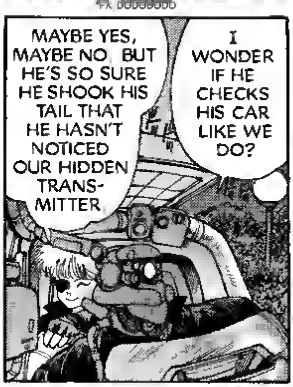
YES, SIR!
EVEN IF *BRIAREOS* BUYS IT, YOU STICK TO YOUR MAN LIKE *GLUE!* GOT IT?!
LISTEN GOOD, WOMAN!! THE NEXT TIME I SAY *TAIL* SOMEONE, YOU TAIL *HIM* UNTIL I SAY *STOP!!*
NOW THEN, DEUNAN...

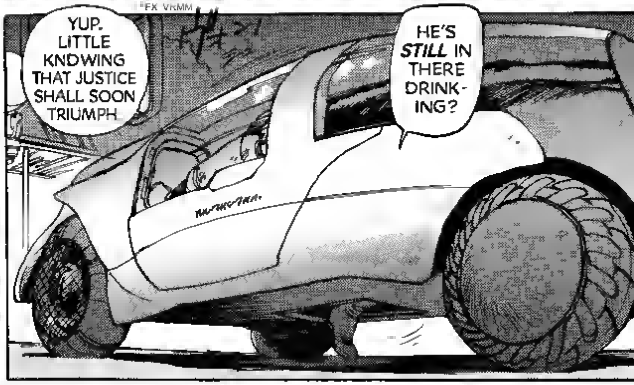
HUH?
NAW, NOT REALLY.
FIGURES.
BAWLED YOU OUT A BIT, HUH?
BUT I STILL SHOULD'A IGNORED LANCE'S ORDERS AND SWAPPED PLACES WITH YOU
YOU GOT DEALT A BAD CARD, GIRL
SURE, IT'S HARD FOR YOU TO BE A BODY-GUARD, WITH JUST ONE EYE.
A LITTLE DESTROYER LIKE YOU AIN'T MADE FOR STAKE-OUTS...
AHEM!
YOU AND ME, WE GOT OUR POSITIONS REVERSED, SEE?
I WILL, NEXT TIME.
NEXT TIME, JUST TRUST MORE IN TEAM-WORK, HUH?

Eswat's bases are largely divided into two types -- official ones without even a guard in restricted areas used for training and 24-7 fully outfitted standby, and unofficial camouflaged ones like undercover civilian housing and rooms in urban apartments. The flat where Boyle was hidden and the facility on this page are the latter.

FX VRMMMM
SEE YA...
THANKS, BUT I'VE GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS...
WE'RE GOING OFF TO KILL A FEW BEERS. WANT TO JOIN US?
FX VROOO
HEY, PANI--?
HMM...WHY DIDN'T SHE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT "BRI" OR "PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS," LIKE SHE USUALLY DOES...?
HMPH!
HEY--WHY'D YOU WANT TO INVITE THAT LITTLE CREEP ALONG? YOU THINK I'LL GET JEALOUS OR SOMETHING? I'M NOT THAT KIND OF TWO-BIT FLOOZY, SEE?! YOU LISTENIN' TO ME?!
BETTER ENJOY LIFE WHILE YOU CAN, LIKE MAYBE TONIGHT, HMM...?
AW, POOR BABY. AS LONG AS THE WORLD'S STILL FULL OF WOLVES RUNNING AROUND PUSHING THEIR INTOLERANT IDEOLOGIES DOWN EACH OTHER'S THROATS, LITTLE SHEEP GOT TO PLAY LION...CAN'T GO BACK TO BEING LAMBS AGAIN.
NOPE-- REPS FROM IRAN AND THE ISLAMIC FEDERATION ARE GONNA POWWOW ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE THE MUNMA. I'M ASSIGNED TO GUARD DUTY.
FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?
OH, NO, YOU DON'T! DON'T YOU DARE TELL ME TO TAIL THAT LITTLE BITCH! I'VE GOT SPECIAL TRAINING TOMORROW, MAGUS!
She's violating security regulations...

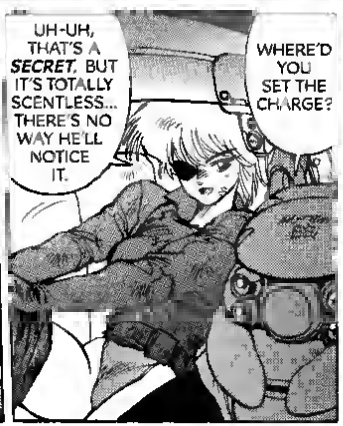

MUMBLE
*FX: BOOOOOOO


MAYBE YES, MAYBE NO. BUT HE'S SO SURE HE SHOOK HIS TAIL THAT HE HASN'T NOTICED OUR HIDDEN TRANS-MITTER.
I WONDER IF HE CHECKS HIS CAR LIKE WE DO?


*FX: VRMM
YUP. LITTLE KNOWING THAT JUSTICE SHALL SOON TRIUMPH.
HE'S *STILL* IN THERE DRINK-ING?

I *THOUGHT* YOU'D SAY THAT
IF HE DOES FIND THE BOOBY TRAP, YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY *NOT* TO DETONATE IT IF THERE ARE CIVVIES AROUND I MEAN IT, DEAR!
OKAY, I PROMISE SHEESH...

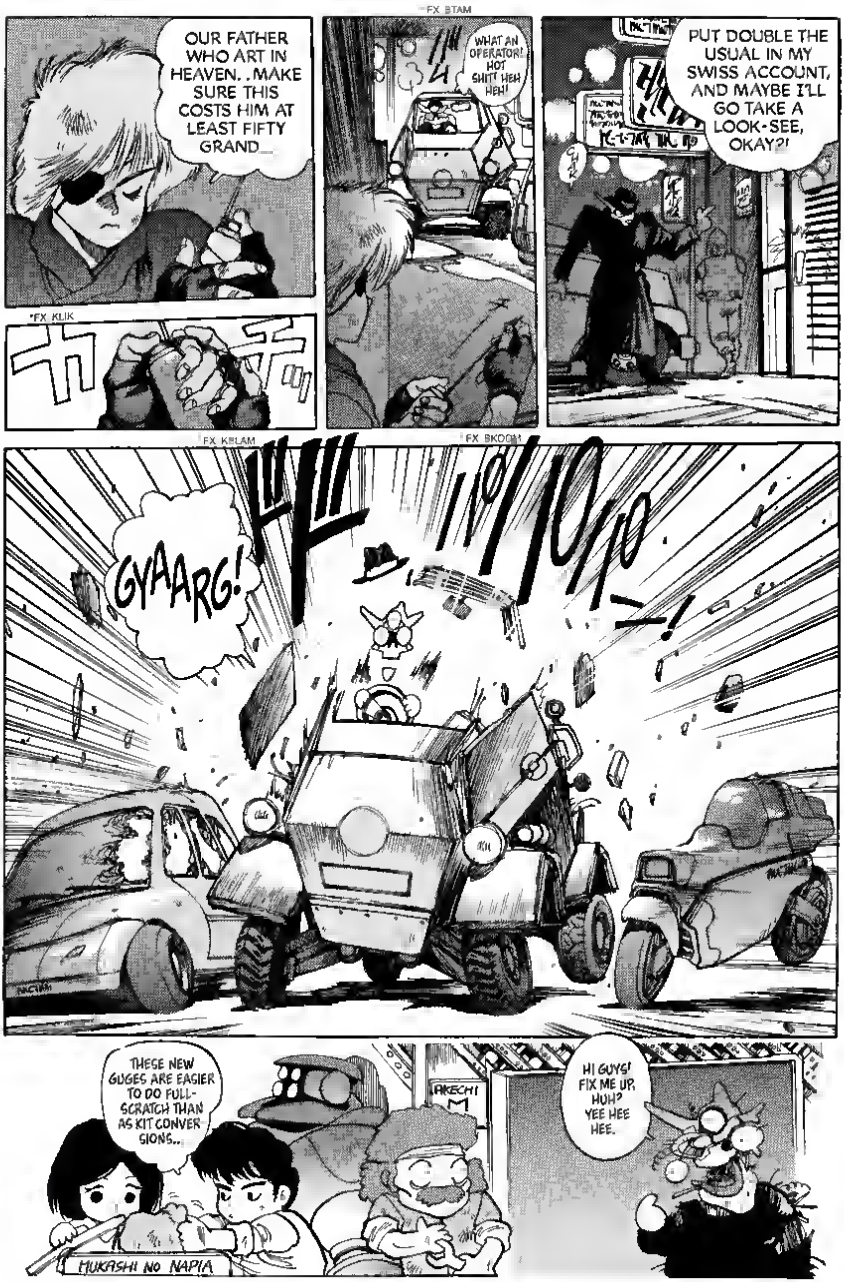
*FX: HEH HEH HEH
AND ONCE HE AND HIS CAR ARE ALL RAGS AND TATTERS, HE'LL SEE THE MEMO ON HIS TERMINAL--"IT'S NOT ALWAYS FATAL," SEE? AND THEN HE'LL REFLECT ON HIS EVIL WAYS, SEE?

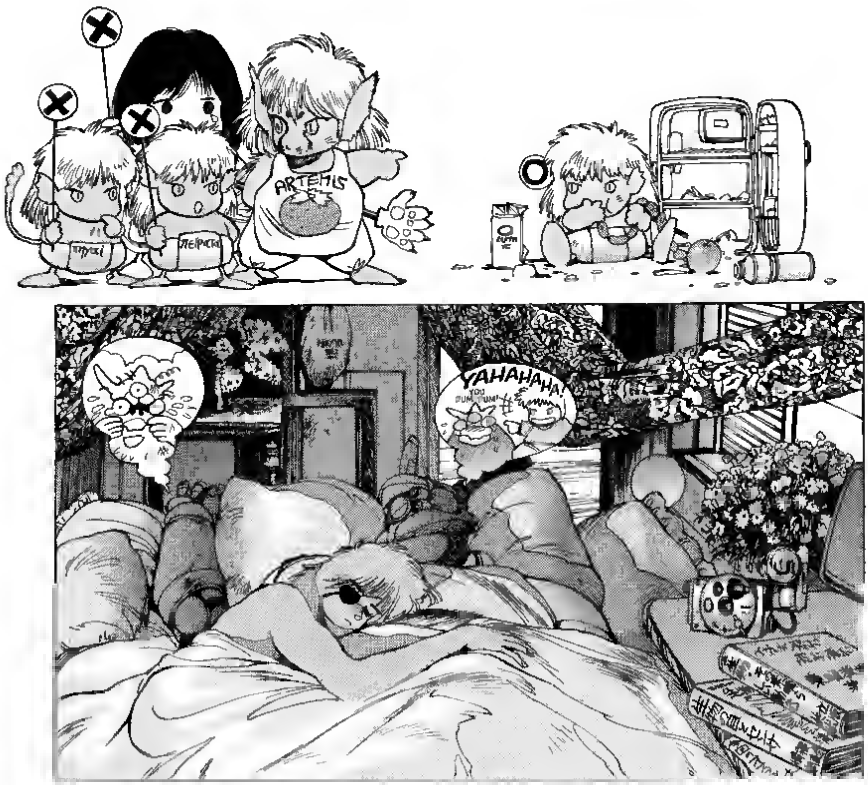

UH-UH, THAT'S A *SECRET*. BUT IT'S TOTALLY SCENTLESS... THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL NOTICE IT.
WHERE'D YOU SET THE CHARGE?

HEY, HUNTER. HOW'S THE DUCK-SHOOTING...?
FLOWN THE COOP, PAL. ZILCH.
NEWS
AH, I'VE SEEN THAT KITTY CAT, TOO. THIS PLACE ISN'T AS LOOSE AS THOSE FRENCH RESTAURANTS, THOUGH. THANK GOD.
TWO FAT DUCK-LINGS FOR OUR TABLE, I FIGURED BUT THEY GOT SNATCHED BY A ONE-EYED TIGER.
NO WAY, JOSE. I'M STILL AFTER THAT FLOCK OF DUCKS. GOT MY HANDS FULL.
HEY, I'M STILL LOOKING FOR A GOOD ISRAELI COOK, YOU KNOW.
I WONDER IF I SHOULO'VE JUST PULLEO OUT LIKE A GOOD BOY. WHAT OO YOU THINK?
DON'T ASK ME. MY JOB'S JUST TO COUNT THE BONES, NO MATTER *WHO* COOKED UP THE DUCKLINGS, EH?
CRUEL, CRUEL...

"Two ducklings" refers to the terronsts Sokaku was following. French restaurant - -a reference to the leniency of French antiterrorism policy

Cook: the man in the photo Deunan lost track of. It denotes hiring a former secret agent as a mercenary in order to indicate lack of involvement by the government. The man in the photo is connected to the Mossad, and Sokaku and the others are apparently connected to the SAS. The SAS is, sure enough, the world's best antiterronsm organization even in this day and age.


FX BTAM
OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN. . MAKE SURE THIS COSTS HIM AT LEAST FIFTY GRAND...
WHAT AN OPERATOR! HOT SHIT! HEH HEH!
PUT DOUBLE THE USUAL IN MY SWISS ACCOUNT, AND MAYBE I'LL GO TAKE A LOOK-SEE, OKAY?!
*FX KLIK
FX KRLAM
FX BKOOM
GYAARG!
THESE NEW GUGES ARE EASIER TO DO FULL-SCRATCH THAN AS KIT CONVERSIONS..
ARECHI M
HI GUYS! FIX ME UP, HUH? YEE HEE HEE.
MUKASHI NO NAPIA


ARTEMIS
YAHAHAHA!

HEY! GUESS WHAT THIS IS!
HMMM
PAPER?
HEH HEH
YOUR EXPENSE REPORTS ..?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO WRITE OFF HERE? YOUR GUGES FROM AKECHI MOTORS? THAT BIKE YOU BOUGHT LAST WEEK?!
ボテ
THUD
NOT TO MENTION THIS FINE 2112 CABERNET.
OUR LOANS ARE SETTLED, WE'VE GOT A PAID VACATION, EVERYTHING'S PEACHY, LIFE'S A ROSE-COLORED CAROUSEL. ♡ YAHOO!
HEE HEE.. MY INSTRUCTOR IN DOCUMENTS AND FORGERY AT THE ACADEMY TOLD ME TO PRACTICE.
GEE... LOOKS JUST LIKE LANCE'S SIGNATURE...

*FX. HEH HEH
BECAUSE THEY ALREADY PROCESSED THE SAME EXPENSE REPORT YESTER-DAY!
AW, BUT..
"BUT WHY," YOU ASK?
NO! ABSOLUTELY NOT! DON'T YOU DARE TURN THAT IN!
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK? CAN I PULL IT OFF?
*FX. DING DONG
ANYWAY, NOW WE CAN CUT LOOSE AND REALLY ENJOY OUR VACATION
A REIM-BURSEMENT CHECK ALREADY?
ACTUALLY, I'M AFRAID I DID SORT OF FORGET THE WINE, BUT..
GUESS WE'VE JUST GOT LARCENY IN OUR HEARTS.
THIS IS AMUSING- TAKE A LOOK
Big (Bug) Eyed Monster
HO!
IF IT'S A MISSIONARY FOR SOME NUT RELIGION, I'LL SEND HIM TO HIS MAKER SPECIAL DELIVERY!
WITH A WORD BULLET!
BUT THEN AGAIN, MAYBE NOT... HMPH!
....
FX. DING DONG DING DONG DING DONG DING DONG DING DONG DING DONG

SUCH PLANNING! MY GOSH!
MY HERO!
TRAVEL MAPS, WITH ALL THE PLACES WE'RE GOING TO ON OUR VACATION ALREADY MARKED.
MAPS?
I JUST BROUGHT THOSE MAPS YOU ASKED FOR! THAT'S ALL! JEEZ-- CALM DOWN!
YO!
HEY, Y'ALL! IT'S GOOD OL' HITOMI!
...
IS ANY OF THAT CAKE STILL LEFT FROM YESTER-DAY?
Tupperware
OH, DON'T BE SUCH A SILLY! I'M SURE THERE'S A HOMEMADE CAKE JUST WAITING IN THE FRIDGE! RIGHT, DEUNAN?
SMILE
YUM YUM
Y KNOW... I FEEL LIKE WE, mmm, BARGED IN ON SOME-THING.
HEH HEH
FX: WAK WAK WAK WAK
*FX: EEEK
JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
OKAY, OKAY! I'LL GIVE YOU MY PIECE. JUST DON'T BITE!
US LOYAL RETAINERS GOT IT ROUGH.
BET YOU THERE'S AN EMERGENCY CALL JUST ABOUT THE TIME HITOMI LEAVES.
MILK
RIGHT?
OF COURSE NOT
DESTRUCTION AND BLIND FAITH AND BUREAUCRACY DON'T EQUAL PROGRESS.

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